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Echo of Elements

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Junior Ballett Zürich – Young Talent Festival: Echo of Elements, Wounded, Submerge – London

By Lynette Halewood on June 21, 2019 in Reviews · 0 Comments



Junior Ballett Zürich in *Echo of Elements*.
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About author



Lynette
Halewood


Work for DanceTabs
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Junior Ballett Zürich

Young Talent Festival: *Echo of Elements, Wounded, Submerge*

★★★☆☆

London, Linbury Theatre

18 June 2019

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Junior Ballett Zürich open the Young Talent Festival at the Linbury, which in the next three weeks will feature a wide range of junior companies and dance schools. From the UK there is Rambert 2, the Rambert School and the Royal Ballet School, and from Europe Norwegian Ballet 2 and Dutch National Ballet Junior Company. It's a chance to see young dancers at the beginning of their careers, and also promises to bring many new works specially made for them.

The Zürich company, established in 2001, gives an opportunity to its dancers via a two-year engagement to make the transition from dance school into a

professional career. In addition to appearing with the main company, the dancers are featured in a programme specifically made for them. The triple bill they bring us here was premiered last autumn, and includes work from Filipe Portugal, a soloist with the main company, and two choreographers both new to the company, Louis Stiens who has made works for the Stuttgart company, and Goyo Montero. The twelve dancers are a mix of nationalities, attractive, lively and energetic, fortunately possessing the stamina required to get through a demanding programme.

The strongest work was the opening item, *Echo of Elements* by Filipe Portugal, perhaps reflecting a closer knowledge of the dancers, as it was well tailored to their youth and energy. The works in the second part of the programme (*Wounded* by Louis Stiens and *Submerge* by Goyo Montero) though well performed didn't offer much of a contrast to each other. In both cases there was much haze, rather gloomy lighting, very plain costumes in bland colours and a general air of angst. By the end of the evening I was hungry for colour and light. The dancers were impressive throughout.

A variety of factors made the opening work *Echo of Elements* the most appealing work of the evening. The music here was by John Adams, and it was eminently danceable and propelled the movement effectively. The lighting was mainly bright enough to see the dancers clearly. There was a curious slowly changing video backdrop by Bertold Stallmach, a tiled perspective which mutated and shifted. Choreographer Filipe Portugal seemed to have the measure of his dancers and made the most of their youthful exuberance and energy in a fluent and lively work. Sometimes the Linbury stage looked a little small for them, as if their leaps and lifts needed broader spaces.

This was the only piece of the evening that featured pointe shoes so we got a better idea of the women's ballet technique. This was clearly a post-Forsythe world with legs whisked skywards and lines pushed to extremes. There was a pleasing sense of order and organisation in the choreography. Duets and trios alternated with group sections and nothing lingered too long. It did look like a structured ballet rather than the other two, more amorphous, dance pieces on the bill.

BWW Review: YOUNG TALENT FESTIVAL: BALLETT ZURICH JUNIOR COMPANY, Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House

by Vikki Jane Vile Jun. 20, 2019



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Now in wind-down mode for the summer, programmers at the Royal Opera House are treating audiences to a host of performances from young dancers, overseas companies and, of course, later on in July, a short residency from the Bolshoi.



The relatively newly unveiled Linbury Theatre is the setting for this year's Young Talent Festival, a succession of evenings featuring work from students and those graduating into company life from both the UK and abroad. The festival opens with confident, assured work from Ballett Zurich's Junior Company.

The triple bill begins with *Echo of Elements* - a neo-classical piece from **Filipe** Portugal. It's the most accomplished work of the evening, highlighting a beautiful quality of movement from the ensemble of 14. Elegant, unobtrusive costumes, simple staging and a tumultuous score is all that's required to showcase the maturity of the talent on stage.

Each dancer cuts an impressive presence: the women are finessed in their plain leotards and black translucent skirts, and the men are strong in curious unitards with cut-out sections.

The choreography alternates between physically challenging duets and trios and full ensemble work. In the intimacy of the Linbury, the smaller segments work best. The larger group moments are more jarring, the exposing space highlighting every off-angle or uneven formation, but individually, movements are clean and confident. It's a satisfying watch for those who enjoy fine technicality.