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### Festival Ballet's 'Up Close on Hope' all new

11:54 PM Fri, Mar 18, 2011 | [Permalink](#)By Channing Gray  [Email this author](#) |  [Email this entry](#)

For its second Up Close on Hope program this season, Festival Ballet Providence has come up with an evening of new work, including first-time choreographic efforts from company members Leticia Guerrero and Vilia Putrius, whose "Dreamer" finds Ilya Burov nodding off in a chair as the corps comes to life to "Bolero."

But it is the concluding offering that's the most intriguing. That would be an expanded version of Viktor Plotnikov's strange and compelling "Surrender," which Festival Ballet is taking to Belgrade next month for an international dance festival.

"Surrender" was only about 10 minutes long when it premiered last season. Now, at the suggestion of Festival Ballet's Misha Djuric, Plotnikov has added an introduction and ending that has more than doubled the length of the piece.

Like all Plotnikov's choreography, "Surrender" is stunning. Long pieces of white fabric are used to wrap dancers and drag them across the stage. And like all his work, it is full of quizzical and unexpected moves. At one point, a female dancer repeatedly slaps a male in the face, then kisses him for the longest time. Later, a male dancer freezes in a sexually suggestive push-up position, as female dancers slide under him and wriggle about.

The piece also featured some wonderful duet work from Putrius and Mindaugas Bauzys.

All the work in this program, which runs this weekend and next at the company's home at 825 Hope Street, is either band new, or new to the company. And the majority of it was choreographed by women like Colleen Cavanaugh, whose fleeting "Tanz," set to music from "Carmina Burana," was a gem. The piece is essentially a buoyant solo with a humorous surprise ending.

The other short but sweet contribution came from Guerrero, her "Encuentro a Solas," which features Lauren Menger and Henry Montilla in some crisp duet work that ends with a passionate embrace.

Karin Tremblay's "Etching" turned out to be a tight, fluid pas de deux between Kirsten Evans and Ian Matysiak. Both dancers wore black, so that bodily shapes often blended together. It's a classy piece that makes its point with grace and elegance.

Newcomer Walter Gutierrez burned up the floor in Vasily Vainonen's classical pas de deux, "Flames of Paris," firing off explosive jumps and partnering beautifully with Alexandria Mitchell.

Tess Bernard's "The Questioners," was perhaps the strangest of the lot, as dancers wearing outlandish masks courtesy of Big Nazo puppets came inching across the stage like worms from outer space. The concept was interesting, but the piece never seemed to get out of first gear.

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