

JUNE 2009

REVIEW

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*Compania Nacional
de Danza 2**'Duende', 'Without words', 'Gnawa'**May 2009**Philadelphia, Annenberg Center**by Stephanie Wragg*

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Just a note about a performance I attended this Saturday May 16 in Philadelphia, at the Annenberg Center.

I was quite excited to see the company and the works of Mr. Duato after reading so much about him.

It was an amazing evening. The dancers were technically very good and somehow 'casual' about the technique: it was used to dance, which was refreshing.

The evening consisted of Duende (to Debussy), Without words (to Shubert) and Gnawa (to traditional Moroccan music). I loved the use of lighting and backdrops. The costumes were spare and thus not distracting.

The first and third pieces were the strongest I felt, full of lovely attention to choreographic detail and motifs that are the choreographer's signature I assume. Much use of the last minute flexed foot, the 'canon' motif where movement is repeated in succession by different dancers, this lovely use of the arms lifted in a quasi-toreador pose. It was all very atmospheric and I could not help thinking of this 'magic realism' that seems to be the forte of Spanish/Latin American/Hispanic artists.

The second piece "Without words" was also lovely. I enjoyed the use of projected images of dancers, images of movement about to happen on stage. It carried the feel of being created for ABT though, in the form of "now this



principal pair dances, and now this principal pair has to have more steps...!.

The evening was just a joy and I am so pleased to have finally discovered the work of this choreographer. YouTube does not do justice to live performance!

The crowd gave the company a well deserved ovation and it's only too bad Mr. Duato did not come to the stage.

Web site for Mr. Duato: www.alhma.com/nacho/nacho.htm
(the company can be found within that site)

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