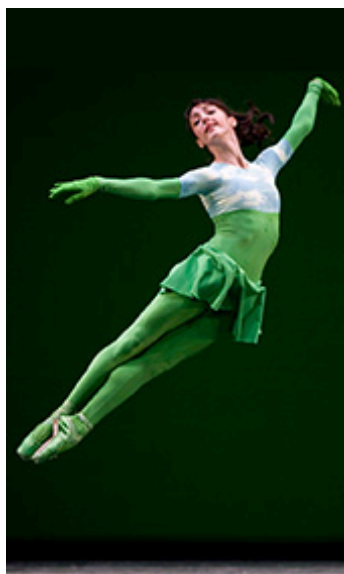


APRIL 2009

REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**San Francisco Ballet**Program V: 'A Garden', 'Joyride',  
'Sandpaper Ballet'**March 2009  
San Francisco, Opera House**by Renee Renouf*

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Helgi Tomasson chose to devote an entire program, Number V, to work Mark Morris created for the company; the opening was March 13. It demonstrated the Morris protean interest in music, his unexpected ways of enhancing or echoing a phrase, and his predictably rampant capacity for fun.

The range of musical choice provided essays in divergence visually as well. Strauss after Couperin, Adams and a Muzak medley by Anderson, no costume credits to Isaac Mizrahi., it's a trip provoking at least a smile.

Morris relies on treatise illustrations drawn from the Francois Couperin era depicting corseted women and beautifully befrocked males with port de bras held outward as if to drip a handkerchief or grasp the top of a pannier. To said position Morris adds a twist of the wrist as if to inspect the palm for a future fortune in his 2001 commission A Garden. The dancers execute the daisy chains from a Wedgwood frieze around the rim of a bowl of that named blue, or are raised instead in a much modified attitude in profile, distorting one of the conventional eight stage

directions. Tina LeBlanc happily inhabited that altered perspective, originally danced by Joanna Berman. Frances Chung, James Sofranko and Matthew Stewart shared the Wirbeltanz with her, a quartet of considerable harmony in attack and texture. Sarah Van Patten and Ruben Martin provided an unexpectedly impressive Menuett. The girls wore black bodices with low backs and off-blue



short skirts. To a person, Morris gave the ensemble a sedate-with-lively-undercurrent look, exactly the impression of those bygone Europeans of the eighteenth century.

Fast forward to the early 21st century with Morris' Joyride and its glistening lurex or Milliskin golden turtle necked biker short with the changing numbers squares at each dancer's sternum. Gennadi Nedviguin was out with a knee problem – and missed. The eight person ensemble stopped, started and maneuvered syncretically with Adams' music, a skillful display, one kindling admiration if not the soul. It probably will take me a couple more times before I "get it."



Lorena Feijoo in Morris' *Sandpaper Ballet*  
© Erik Tomasson

With St. Patrick's Day just two days away, the wearin' o' the green was definitely in place with Morris' Sandpaper Ballet finale. It will not surpass The Concert as a closer, but does possess a puckish charm and Morris is masterful in exploiting the

unexpected stop and start. Pierre-Francois Vilanoba and Kristin Long were responsible for the pas de deux, and Sofiane Sylve essayed the supported pyrotechnics created by Muriel Maffre, echoing her Gallic élan; Tina LeBlanc provided her share of effervescence. With her hair in a pony tail Katita Waldo was not to be discounted, remarkably juvenile in delivery, sharp in execution; Lorena Feijoo provided a perfect impersonation of a seasoned dancer playing ingénue. Pierre-Francois Vilanoba was wonderfully game, the genre is definitely not his thing, but there were one of two moments when a delay in the formation brought out his capacity to project character. The ensemble dancing and scurrying was simply first-rate.

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