



## **Steppin' Ahead**

July 12, 2004

Five dances not yet performed in the United States were shown this weekend in Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket. Two of them choreographed by Tim Rushton for New Danish Dance Theatre, were so entirely original they cannot be compared to anything from the American modern tradition. It's more evidence that the most significant developments in contemporary dance continue to happen in Europe.

In "Shadowland" and "Graffiti," Rushton contrasts the chaotic and inspired words of Beat poets Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs with an extremely ordered, classical ballet-based technique. The speed and articulation found in Balanchine, further exploited by such choreographers as Karole Armitage and Michael Clark, is less important to Rushton than a fluid, expressive spine and torso that undulate constantly in his work, giving it an organic feel. Rushton uses long sections of unison phrasing to amplify the movement ideas, and the dancers touch each other only rarely. The result is a highly expressive theater that looks clean and is emotionally provoking. By the end of "Graffiti," when the glorious dancer Edham Jesenkovic was dripping in red body paint and a recording of Burroughs singing "Falling in Love Again" played from a small radio, the audience leapt to a standing ovation, some in joyous tears.

-Theodore Bale