



Nicholasleichterdance

**92 on 42, The Duke on 42nd Street
New York, New York**

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Reviewed by Susan Yung

Nicholas Leichter's choreography is joyfully infectious; he punctuates smooth, pulsing phrases with hops and gestures. His musical choices vary from pop and R&B to experimental commissioned pieces for strings. He sometimes floats the movement atop the music, like a boat riding the sea's swells. Or he leads a phrase across a rhythm's path, creating a curious tension—as simple as stillness set against music.

Nicholasleichterdance performed two world premieres in the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Project's series. In *Never End*, a buoyant work to music by Alfredo Hidrovo and Aaliyah, the dancers moved with a luscious elasticity, crunching up their clenched fists or wiggling their heads to add emphasis. Dressed in pastel costumes by nldnyc and Mindy Nelson, they moved quickly through phrases only to linger awhile to savor a pose. After several pirouettes, Khalda Logan snapped into an arabesque, a repeating motif. Leichter performed a riveting solo while Daniel Clifton patiently balanced Aaron Draper on his feet.

Skin Diving set a somber tone with grey and maroon costumes. Three musicians performed live Chris Lancaster's frenetic (and overmiked) composition for strings. Holly Handman, on a sojourn, paired with Clifton and later wandered alone, spiritually adrift though flanked by companions. While more dramatically ambitious than *Never End*, its melodramatic tone seemed at odds with the movement's sybaritic tone.

Leichter, of African American and Jewish heritage, braids a strong thread of African dance with strands of club, modern and ballet. His six dancers, of varied races and body types, filter his movement in very different ways. Handman gives it a ferocity, while Naima Bigby lends it a quiet confidence. It's no surprise that Leichter is his own best interpreter. His sense of center is uncanny, as if his torso remains constantly perpendicular to the earth while his limbs shoot in opposite directions, suspended like a Calder mobile. As gratifying as it is to watch Leichter, until his company can match his compelling presence and emotional openness, he remains the one to watch.