

# REVIEWS

## Moraporvida Contemporary Dance

2007-08-19

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Moraporvida gets better and better.

Less than a year and a half ago Moraporvida dance company presented a concert of three works “with promise” by a choreographer who refused to identify himself in the program. Since that time Moraporvida has presented two more concerts, and that choreographer, Jacob Mora, has taken the group from promising to probably the best modern dance company in Front Range Colorado. This week the Boulder International Fringe Festival is presenting the third of those Moraporvida concerts in an hour long work titled “Alone.” In that concert Mora uses ten of Front Range Colorado’s best dancers in ways most of those dancers have never been seen. The perception I have is that most of those dancers have been sort of hidden in the choreography of other local dance companies, whereas Mora’s choreography uses them in ways where their ability simply explodes onto the dance stage. One example is Lara Hayes-Giles. Everyone knew Hayes-Giles was an amazing dancer, but in “Alone” Mora uses her abilities to the max, and the result is amazing. And Mora does it in ways that never seem to put those dancers in danger. Just maybe it is because Mora himself is an amazing dancer and inherently knows how to use dance bodies he is privileged to work with at any time.

“Alone” is based on an 1830 poem by Edgar Allan Poe of the same name. It is set in five sections; “Love one,” “What do you remember,” “Right now,” “Bitter sweet,” and “Alone”. With no breaks the work moves seamlessly through all of those sections with choices that range from solos to huge space filling ensembles. Phrasing varies from ultra-hyperkinetic leaps, lifts and falls to pedestrian walking and stillness. Seldom is the stage empty, but often there is only one dancer standing still. .... or, even ten dancers standing still. Then, in seconds, the dance explodes again; sometimes in all dancers; other times in one. Mora knows the lifetime of any single dance and gives his audience changes, which are sometimes subtle, other times major. Unison is real unison with every dancer cueing their movement perfectly. All of those dancers have amazing abilities, and in particular musicality that transfers Mora’s myriad of music choices into their bodies. Then, at times, Mora just allows the sound score and dance to coexist.

Mora’s and Hayes-Giles opening duet, which begins with them spooning under a down right downlight, examines all the nuances of a relationship. Mora’s phrasing switches from stillness and pedestrian walking to full blown dance. The couple is tender and loving in one moment, and in a full out “spat” in the next. Those “spats” send Mora into abject resignation only to have Hayes-Giles approach and re-engage him. Finally Mora

ignores her, only to have her launch herself onto his back, where he is stuck with her presence like it or not. Throughout the other four sections Poe's poem is always there and one has a choice of discerning meaning, or just enjoying the dances. The final section, "Alone," essentially bookends the work by placing Mora in the same down right downlight as the opening section, in a solo that illustrates his pain and resignation in being by himself.

During ensemble sections smaller groups constantly arise, sometimes separated in space and intertwined with other dancers, sometimes together, and sometimes moving through the ensemble. Two short duets set on Mora and Terrell Davis uses the considerable technique in both men in stunning ways. Unfortunately both duets are over in seconds.

Moraporvida's dancers include several Front Range "mainstays." The women are Rachel Ashley, Lara Hayes-Giles, Jessica Hastings, Molly B. Sanchez, Kristi Siciliano, Margaret Skokan, and Amy Weisenhorn. The company has five (yes, five) men in Jacob Mora, Terrell Davis, Chuck Graham, Lyle Nelson, and Markus Ramirez. The burden on Mora now is keeping this dance company funded and viable, without personal bankruptcy. Much of that depends on local funding agencies, and Mora's ability to get their notice.

Even stuck with the Boulder Fringe's non-existent light cue rehearsals and a truncated technical rehearsal Craig Bushman created a lighting design for "Alone" that revealed all the dance and set moods that fit Poe's poem and Mora's dance well. The Sunday, August 19, 2007 performance of "Alone" had a painfully small audience, but like all Moraporvida's audiences it was wonderfully diverse. One hopes that in the next five performances interest grows along with audience numbers. Those performances are all in the Boulder Dairy Center's Performance Space and happen on the following dates and times: Wednesday August 22 at 9:00 PM, Thursday August 23 at 5:00 PM, Friday August 24 at 7:30 PM, Saturday August 25 at 4:30 PM, and Sunday August 26 at 7:30 PM. You can order tickets in advance ([www.boulderfringe.com](http://www.boulderfringe.com)) if you want to pay a husky "advance sale surcharge" or you can buy them at the Dairy box office about 30 minutes before each show.

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