

# Steadstyle Chicago

February 17, 2009

**February 2009 Dance Review by Alan Bresloff**

## **River North Chicago Dance Company**



Valentine's Day is a day for lovers and romance. It is often a day for things of beauty (flowers), things that are sweet (candy) and things that give pleasure (I leave this to your imagination) and this past Valentine's Day weekend Chicago was treated to a spectacular performance from the River North Chicago Dance Company. Since its inception 20 years ago, RNCDC has mentored and developed new Choreographers, seeking to bring out their hidden talents and develop them to the point where they can use all the creative juices within themselves. While this concert will be long gone when you read about it, my intent is to make you aware of them so that when they put another performance on, you will make sure not to miss these spectacularly creative talents.

This wonderful performance at The Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Millennium Park featured three groundbreaking World Premieres. One of these, choreographed by Artistic Director Frank Chaves is about a torrid affair and is set to the music of Tenor Andrea Bocelli. What a marvelous, exciting piece. But there was



so much more. "A Mi Manera" uses the music of Paul Anka ("My Way") as performed by The Gipsy Kings and exquisitely danced by Clayton Cross, Monique Haley and Jessica Wolfrum. The first act ends with a piece titled "Pulse" and the choreography by Daniel Ezralow is pure genius. There is what appears to be sliding on the ice, a tango, tumbling, somersaults, and more to the haunting music by David Lang with some unusual electronic sounds by Michael Lowenstein.

After the break, we came back wondering just how they could top the first set, and they did! They opened with "Train", a sort of combination military training camp and possible boxer's training camp. Robert Battle's choreography included lots of tumbling and acrobatics. This was followed by the "Sentir em Nos" number by Frank Chaves which then led to a finale that can only be described as sensational featuring the wonderful voices of the Chicago Children's Choir. Every twist and turn that one can imagine the body is capable of and more is used in this seven part set called "Underground Moments". The word that describes this would have to... oh well, there really isn't one word that can describe the entire evening. WOW is just not enough.

I also want to give some bravos out for some very clever lighting (including some daring strobe effects) by Christopher Ash, Todd L. Clark, Ashley Roland and Joshua Starbuck as well as some dazzling costumes by Nathan R. Rohrer, Ashley Roland, Jordan Ross, Jackson Lowell and Jeff Hancock. And lastly, the Company, they are stupendous, one and all: Hanna Britson, Clayton Cross, Christian Denice, Brandon DiCriscio, Michael Gross, Monique Haley, Reginald Harris, Lauren Kias, Lizzie MacKenzie, Melanie Manale-Hortin, Cassandra Porter, Ricky Ruiz and Jessica Wolfrum. Bravo!

If you are into watching great choreography performed by talented dancers keep your eye out for this troupe. River North Chicago Dance Company certainly got my attention and affection this evening and I know that I will be back for more. To keep up with them, check out [www.rivernorthchicago.com](http://www.rivernorthchicago.com).

## About Alan Bresloff



Alan Bresloff, once an actor himself, has been covering the Chicago Theater Scene since 1993, first as the Theater and Arts critic for LaRaza newspaper, then with Salsachicago.com and then onto Extra Newspaper and The Epoch Times. He also writes for ElImparcial and TeleGuia. His reviews can also be seen on [www.theatreinchicago.com](http://www.theatreinchicago.com). Alan does not call himself a "critic" but a "reviewer" as he tries to educate the reader about theater itself, what is a good value, what to look for in a play or musical and more.

"Exposure to theater is a very important part of a young person's life" he says. "Learning about the arts and culture is in fact learning about life" and he tries to explain more in his reviews than just if it is good or bad. Even some of the poor productions have some value, he often says and he would love your feedback on shows that you have seen. You can write him here or at [albresloff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:albresloff@sbcglobal.net).