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Mateo troupe succeeds at making leap for 'New'

By THEODORE BALE

The latest program from Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre, "New Dances," couldn't be more aptly titled. Two premieres, one set to music by Haydn and the other to Ravel, are significant departures for Mateo, and they're stellar.

It's no coincidence that ballerina Meg Flaherty-Griffith reigns supreme at the heart of Mateo's "Courtly Lovers," which he set to Haydn's "Symphony No. 94." Flaherty-Griffith has become a significant muse for Mateo, a kind of Suzanne Farrell to his Balanchine. She was the catalyst for his murky "Dark Profiles," set to Beethoven. Here, Mateo exploits her talents further in a pleasing comic role.

At the opening of this light-hearted ballet, Flaherty-Griffith emerges suddenly from a line of women facing upstage in a two-dimensional silhouette.

She continues on, feisty and confident in all three movements, giving one the sense that she's the sort of dancer who talks back during rehearsals. Cosmin Marcule-

Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre presents "New Dances," at The Sanctuary Theatre in Cambridge, Friday. Continues through April 13.

tiu, a Romanian dancer new to the company, was a charismatic partner for her. His impressive solo in the third movement, full of traveling grand jetes and multiple pirouettes, was a shining example of how classical technique can amplify narrative.

"Reverie," set to Ravel's "Piano Concerto in G," is a peculiar and absorbing ballet, containing what might be Mateo's most intricate pas de deux to date.

Featured artists Elizabeth Scherban Shinzawa and Parren Ballard danced it in an eerie, lyrical manner. Sybil Watkins and David DuBois mirrored their energy successfully in a mesmerizing passage in which Ravel's music recalls a wandering waltz by Satie.

Revivals of Mateo's "Back to Bach," starring a jubilant Emmee McInnis, and "Windborne" completed this satisfying show. If Mateo has any remaining hurdle to overcome, it's finding live musicians to perform with his ensemble.

DANCE REVIEW