

BALLET GROUP BOWS AT THE CLARK CENTER

Contemporary Ballet Ensemble is a charmingly misleading title for a company that is balletically inclined rather than adequately trained in that discipline. Over the weekend the group made its first appearance at the Clark Center with a program that was a mosaic of dance styles.

The company's resident choreographers, Morris Donaldson and Jay Norman, provided three of the five works, all of which combined jazz, modern and balletic elements in unsatisfying amounts. It was a relief to see the company in a straight modern piece like Seamus Murphy's "Ionization," which afforded the opportunity for a single sustained performing approach. The other works juxtaposed varying styles in unflattering ways.

Among the dancers, Loretta Abbot had a vibrant jazz attack, Barbara Kravitz demonstrated modest balletic skill and Robert Bowyer showed energetic modern styling, but no one put it all together. Even if everyone were adept at the various styles, the slender choreography would not have benefited.

It is always to be suspected when dances have explanatory program notes that perhaps the choreography isn't as contentful as it might be. In this case, most of the dances needed the notes that accompanied them.

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