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**Sometimes Just Dancing Is the Most Profound Thing**

***posted by Wendy Perron on Tuesday, Sep 14, 2010***

**I caught one show of Festival Twenty Ten at DTW on Friday, and Ellis Wood’s dancing had me in thrall. She performed an excerpt of her upcoming MOM, because, well, at 45, she’s now a mother. Just 10 or 15 years ago, she was a young talented, facile thing. Now, three children later, she had such a centeredness, such an earthiness, and such an essentialness that I was moved from beginning to end.**

**I can hardly even describe her dancing except that she was juicy and low to the floor; with flicks of her head and hands as though she just thought of something she has to tell you. Her open face reflects a fluidly changing inner life. Years ago, she did theses things with incredible mercurial timing—virtuoso of quicksilver changes—just because she could. Now she does them because of an inner necessity. She seems exactly as committed to dancing as she was 12 years ago, but with more life having been lived. While so many other choreographers are dolling up their shows with clever partnering, video, film, and all manner of techno stuff, she holds down the fort of modern dance as a form of individual, body/mind inquiry and physical connection to the ground.**

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**Ellis Wood in MOM, photo by Steven Schreiber, courtesy DanceNOW NYC**

**This festival, sponsored by DanceNOW NYC and taking place at DTW, had other interesting things (I missed the first of the 10 numbers.)**

**A duet called Order Made, by Makiko Tamura spoofed video games, presenting a man and woman with doll-like precision and giddiness. Tamura’s partner, Ryoji Sasamoto, was just terrific in this surreal, quirky mode, but he was more beautiful just loping around the space.**

**Christopher Williams’ Mumbo-Jumbo (an excerpt) was a naughty cross-cultural romp, pairing Indian music with shameless minstrel-style shenanigans like knocking knees and flailing arms. It tread the fine line between begin about race and being racist. Paul Singh and Raja Kelly embraced the absurdity with relish. In the end they sort of mate, which might be a wish for the different races and cultures to get along. Amen.**

**Brittany Fridenstine-Keefe was lovely while working deeply through the spine on pointe in Stuart Loungway’s Chamber, to Handel piano music.**

**In Snapshots of a Past, choreographed by Daniel Charon, Joanna Kotze (who contributed to the choreography) had a very real quality that gave off a whiff of both melancholy and sullenness.**

**But I came away mostly with Ellis Wood in my mind. I had studied with her father David Wood at the Graham school, and her mother Marnie Thomas was a "demonstrator," so I felt a connection back through the generations. Whereas Graham is often quoted (and mocked) as saying she lived in “the house of pelvic truth,” there was an aspect of Ellis Wood’s dancing that seemed true in the pelvis—and back, and legs, and shoulders, and face. Somehow it was emotionally thrilling to see her dance like that. She was so inside her dancing, inside her life.**

**And I'm happy because I just found out Ellis Wood has been selected as the Festival Twenty Ten “DanceNOW Challenge” winner for her presentation of MOM.**

**Bravo, Ellis and DanceNOW NYC!**