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**DTW Gala Welcomes a New Era**

*posted by Wendy Perron on Tuesday, Dec 07, 2010*  
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Oooh that was fun last night! We saw the most delicious dances and heard the shortest speeches. And we celebrated Dance Theater Workshop, the old (click [**here**](http://www.dancemagazine.com/issues/June-2006/-Only-Yesterday) for our story on DTW in the early days and how it evolved) as well as the new.

Artistic director Carla Peterson spoke eloquently about DTW’s mission to nurture dance artists at the beginning of their careers. Bill T. Jones, who was in the audience and who will be merging his company with DTW (click [**here**](http://dancemagazine.com/issues/March-2009/This-Just-In) if you missed that bit of news) knows all about this. Some of his earliest works were done at DTW (mine too). So the merger bodes well for the future of DTW, or rather, in its new incarnation, New York Live Arts.

On to the dances. David Parker and the Bang Group’s *Bang,* from his first performance on Fresh Tracks, was wonderfully thuddy. Like a pair of kindergarteners making trouble at naptime, Jeffrey Kazin and Nic Petry went from just banging on the floor to an intertwined duet in glorious awkwardness. Their blunt movement worried us just enough to wonder: Would one of them clunk a head on the floor hard enough to cause damage? Were those kisses on the hands (each other’s and their own) affectionate or slapstick? Like all of Parker’s work, the rhythms were part of the fun. Fittingly, this gala honored both Fresh Tracks and David Parker.

Ellis Wood is the Julia Roberts of downtown. She’s gorgeous, expressive, luscious, and lit from within. In *MOM,* an excerpt of a larger solo, she dips and toddles; her deep plié seeps into the floor. Then she suddenly re-arranges as though she just thought of something she’d like her child to take to school. She wallows in her own defiance and then, with a flick of the elbow, lightens up, laughing at herself from within.

David Neumann and Doug Elkins’ *Testosterone Diversion* is as hilarious as its title. They bumble along in their knit caps, tripping, doing soft double takes. When they start dancing—they are both terrific movers—it’s still funny but beautiful too. In their hip hop language, Neumann ripples his arms as fluidly as any swan queen, and Elkins shakes his belly like a hip hop Santa. We ate it up.

We drank up too. Here’s to another 45 years of DTW (soon to be NYLA).