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DANCE REVIEW

## Homage to Spirit of Poland's People

### José Limón Company at Baruch Performing Arts Center

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In 1958 the choreographer José Limón tested out his lyrical side with a lovely suite of dances. "Mazurkas," set to Chopin, is an uncomplicated response to music. Created to honor the spirit of the people of Poland, which he visited in 1957, the work has been out of the repertory for 20 years, but the Limón Dance Company brought it back for its season at the Baruch Performing Arts Center.



Paula Lobo for The New York Times  
José Limón Dance Company Logan Frances Kruger in "Mazurkas" at the Baruch Performing Arts Center

There's little heavy-handed or overtly heroic about this sweeping piece. "Mazurkas," seen Wednesday night and featuring the pianist Vanessa Perez, is about dancing, and the unaffected ease with which the current Limón members approach the material shows the movement without the detrimental coating of too much feeling. Still, revivals are tricky; modern dance can look dated with little effort, and at times the presentational style of "Mazurkas," a 10-section piece staged by Sarah Stackhouse, goes to a time-capsule place. Its technical and unpretentious full-bodied movement is the draw.

The overall look is natural. The women dance in off-white sleeveless dresses, while the men wear white shirts and black pants. In the first duet Elise Drew-Leon and Dante Puleio hold hands and spin in gentle circles as their feet spring from the floor in soft jumps that demonstrate decorum and delicacy. The tempo changes as Aaron Selissen stomps his feet and slaps his thighs. Later Mr. Puleio and Daniel Fetecua Soto join him in a display of virility.

In Limón's work the use of the back is integral from the way it connects the legs and torso to constantly curving arms, which seem to sprout from the spine allowing the body to morph seamlessly between weight and weightlessness. Kathryn Alter drifts in and out of statuesque poses, pausing every so often to tap her wrists overhead. Despite her tricky changes of

direction Logan Frances Kruger moves through Limón's formal patterns with silky radiance. Even more than the movement, which hints at character dancing and at times can become too unvarying, the treasure of this dance is how it creates a private universe.

The program also included "The Moor's Pavane," a classic 1949 Limón piece that distills "Othello" into a dance-drama for four characters, and "Come with Me," a piece from 2012 by the Brazilian choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras. As the Moor, Raphaël Boumaïla was smoldering, but Roxane D'Orléans Juste, as the Moor's wife, performed with oppressive piousness.

"Come with Me," set to music by Paquito D'Rivera, is the program's breeziest dance, contrasting relaxed arms and a strong torso with quick footwork that calls for little preparation as the working leg kicks up a storm. Flexed feet and sprightly low leaps recall moments from "Mazurkas," yet bring the dancers into the present. Ebullient, frisky, they meet it head on.