

# REVIEW

## **Dance program's vibrancy epitomizes spring**

**By Elizabeth Clark**

*Kalamazoo Gazette, May 15, 2009*

Wellspring/Cori Terry & Dancers' Spring Concert of Dance, which premiered Thursday and runs through Sunday, epitomizes the season through its vibrant colors and the debut of founder and artistic director Terry's latest work in homage to painter Georgia O'Keeffe.

The floweresque "I'll Paint it Big," which premiered at the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts on Sunday in conjunction with the KIA's Georgia O'Keeffe exhibition, celebrates the artist's gift for flowers in various stages of bloom - a natural fit for the modern-dance company that carries on the traditions of Terry's mentor, Erick Hawkins, and his passion for fluid, abstract movement.

Lights and sound director Elizabeth Harkins shone as she transformed the stage, its backdrop and even the dancers' bodies into dahlia-like blooms that wonderfully complemented the sunny choreography.

Terry wasn't the only choreographer painting big, vibrant strokes for the program, which also premiered new works by the ever-quirky Michael Miller and Rachel Miller, a relative newcomer to choreographing for the company who dazzles like a veteran.

Michael Miller's "Amygdala," set to a discordant mix of techno, industrial and "noise" music, is unmistakably Michael Miller.

He seems especially skilled at inspiring emotions one might not generally associate with dance. I've seen him garner the belly laughs usually reserved for stand-up comedy and the playful joy associated with watching a puppy frolic.

In the case of "Amygdala," the movements and music seemed tantamount to the misfirings of the brain during a psychotic break. While that might sound like a big diss, it's truly the opposite and a testament to his uncanny ability to evoke his intended emotion, whatever it may be.

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The juxtaposition of "Amygdala" between the reprises of the most musical and lyrical pieces - 2008's "Ladino Rondo" and 2005's exquisite "Seeking Elsewhere" - further served to set the unique piece apart. It was a huge delight once again to enjoy "Seeking Elsewhere," this time presented by a different set of dancers including new apprentice and welcome addition Jasmine Statzer.

Rachel Miller's "Those Who Wait" premiere likewise wowed. One audience member very audibly gasped "Wow!" near its close. Her gift not only for breathtaking choreography but also for playing up the strengths of each dancer - Statzer's youthful sensuality, Francesca Pileci-Bates' graceful sophistication, Michael Miller's experience and versatility and Rachel Miller's raw strength - inspired my husband, a modern-dance neophyte, to proclaim that her piece seemed more advanced than the others and was one of his favorites.