

IN PERFORMANCE: DANCE

By Jennifer Dunning

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Inventive, Fluid Movement And the Telling Gesture Seraphim Dance Theater Alvin Ailey
American Dance Center

Raymond C. Harris's Seraphim Dance Theater performed in a studio on Saturday night. But the Spartan setting melted away only a few minutes into the first of the eight recent

dances on the program, and was replaced by an airy, vivid landscape filled with inventive choreography, intriguing people and the incandescent joy of dancing.

Mr. Harris has a solid sense of craft and an exhilarating taste in popular and traditional music. He has put together a company of eight strong performers, though none of his dancers has quite his lightness and deft, sharp focus. And he has created a style, rooted in ballet and modern and jazz dance, that pours movement out in a liquid flow punctuated by quick, telling gestures.

That flow was evident in the first dance, "What a Place." Mr. Harris developed a potent dance sign language for "The River Niger," which he performed with Sarah Swenson Yarborough to the Joseph Walker poem. And his gift for moving ensembles could be seen in "On Earth as It Is in Heaven."

"Lovin' " offered a fresh look at two foxy lovers, portrayed by Tina Bush and Jeffrey Hankinson. And Dudley Williams, a guest artist, has one of his most powerful roles in "De Blin' Man," set to music sung with haunting restraint by Dennis Hinson to piano accompaniment by Carl Maultsby. The solo is slight and delicately wrought. But by its end, we have come to know a proud, decisive, spiritual man of another, perhaps more elegant era.

Seraphim was completed by Kim Grier, Yuko Yamane, the spidery-limbed and lyrical Parnell Allen and Krystal Hall, who manages to be both boisterous and angelic.

JENNIFER DUNNING

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