



## Dance Review: Bring Your Lungs, Amy Marshall at Ailey Citigroup



Amy Marshall Dance Company -Photography by Tom Caravaglia

Go see Amy Marshall at Ailey Citigroup to witness the polarities one dance company can embody in 90 minutes of work. Brought to life with some of the most confident technique and fierce execution of ballet and modern choreography, Marshall's dancers bring their audience to roaring cheers numerous times.

Opening with 2005's *English Suite*, a sextet clad in nude Grecian dresses and shiny tights leaps about with grandiose, virtuosic movements. Like spritely nymphs in the forest, they wield their technique as if involved in a large scale show and tell. Wearing eyes of constant wonderment as if part of their costume, I often wonder where their joy comes from, but I suppose the height of their jumps speaks for itself. In five parts, this piece begins to expose Marshall's penchant for either uplifted staccato movements paired with perma-grins or wilted weeping willows with arms and eyes full of sorrow. No matter what way you look at it, this piece shows stunning sculpted legs taking flight.

In Marshall's world premiere of *A Gift*, she dances at 7months pregnant in a snug green dress amidst cascading light. After *English Suite*'s classical tonnage, Gabrielle Roth's more visceral percussion showcases her endearment for the life growing within her and how that emanates into the life of her limbs. Playing with the underbelly of the rhythm it seems to speak to the greater understanding of life a pregnancy yields. When one heart beats next to another, it's bound to expand your sense of musicality and Marshall does not shy away from this sensation. She exits back-turned to the audience with her arms nestling her womb. A true gift to everyone in the audience...

To combat the cerebral quality of *Enghien Suite*, the same cast comes out in glowing red costumes carving the air with aggressive arms and legs, matching the ferocity of *The Jack Quartet's* strings. Another world premiere, *Riding the Purple Twilight* alternates tricks like illusions with pendulum-esque lifts as Marshall sprints the line between showoff and showcase masterfully. Her dancer's seem to answer all calls of 'is this possible?' with yes, yes, yes! as they too understand that milking their strengths is not necessary given their abundance. If you will, the Amy Marshall Company gives the notion of "bunheads" a new mystique. As volatile vixens in red, the female cast members lead the men into airborne tangos on fire.



Amy Marshall Dance Company, Photography by Lois Greenfield

2000's *Askew* continues to transmute my first impression of Marshall's work with her chosen sextet in S&M-esque costumes dancing as intensely as their costumes dictate. Sculpted arms slice through the air as they travel the space with the precision of a world class marching band. A bird's eye view would have revealed this piece as a true kaleidoscope of wonder - constantly turning under and over itself revealing new perspective. Marshall works as an over caffeinated sculptor here with dancer's ever so equipped. The rivalry of men versus women makes it tough to pick sides.

In Excerpts from *Two Duets and a Quartet*, a technically proficient, albeit listless pairing in Laura Halzack and James Samson, graces the stage. Halzack moves with grace but her impetus to move seems to rely on Samson, similar to a plastic ballerina's movement that stems from the winding of a knob of a young girl's the jewelry box. Despite this, Halzack is the crown jewel in this piece, a romantic heroine with increasing charm through the hem of her gorgeous costume. Unfortunately for Samson, his black tee-shirt and pants blend into the black box making him a "helping hand" with little more than that as an identity. Towards the end, an intimate spooning moment transforms into a glorious lift - perhaps the place this piece should grow from to offer up both dancers more than the identity of "jewelry box gem" and "hired help."



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In the world premiere of *Going for the Gold*, Olympic dreams accost the audience with a cast of 14 entering in swim caps in unitards. Immediately garnering raucous laughter from the audience, this piece may not win the gold but does it's damndest for the next ten minutes. Layering phrase upon phrase of movement atop one another like constructing a thickly woven quilt, it reveals Marshall's depth of vision. Emulating the struggle to get the gold, the cast's raw work spits out sweat through turns and leaps that earn several mid-piece catcalls and cheers.

Get to Ailey's Citigroup to see the many characters Marshall can illuminate within her small cast and bring your booming cheering voice, you'll need it!



[iDANZ Critix Corner](#) Official Dance Review by [Eileen Elizabeth](#) Performance: Amy Marshall Dance Company  
Choreography: Amy Marshall Venue: Citigroup Theater  
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