

**Review: NDT 2**

**By Su Carroll**

## ***NDT 2, Theatre Royal Plymouth***

Theatre Royal Plymouth's membership of Dance Consortium has yielded riches beyond our wildest dreams – international companies producing incredible work and generously sharing it with a Westcountry audience.

The concept of a triple bill offers the chance to see wildly different work in one space. Nederlands Dans Theater's NDT2 company didn't disappoint with three note perfect pieces – two of them UK premieres. Balancing a programme is a skill and NDT2 startled, soothed and then invigorated with *The Big Crying*, *Simple Things* and *IMPASSE*.

Marco Goecke's *The Big Crying* (one of the UK premieres) was simply breathtaking. Regarded as the German choreographer's most personal work to date, it was created shortly after the death of his father. It is incredibly energetic - the dancers moving at an almost inhuman pace, with jerking robotic movements. It oozes anger and pain which sharply contrasts with the soothing sounds of the soundtrack which features tracks from singer Tori Amos. The dancers are mesmerising, moving in unison – an incredible feat when NDT2's company of 19 are all on the stage together.

Twisted, distorted, unpredictable, the human body is pushed to the limit in this passionate and relentless piece delivered with incredible energy by these young dancers – almost all born in this century. But there is some gentle, almost unseen comfort from all this activity at the end which was surprisingly effective.

*Simple Things* has a more traditional air – four dancers (two men, two women) offer a variety of pas-de-deux with a charming score which ranges from 18th century Haydn piano work to Alan Bern's 21st century *Scarlatti Fever*. Hans Van Manen's 2001 work has a wonderful soothing quality to it as the dancers change partners for intimate and hypnotic movements that are wonderfully pleasing.

The evening ends with the second UK premiere – John Inger's *IMPASSE*. French-Lebanese jazz trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf's joyous score takes the audience on a journey. The dancers appear on stage one by one offering a relatively traditional take



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on contemporary dance. Gradually the numbers increase, sombre black clothing gives way to a raid on the dressing-up box with clowns and burlesque, and precise, measured moves are overtaken by a kind of dance chaos. As the pace hots up, so the performance space gets smaller. Clever, funny and uplifting, it's a fitting end to this feast of dance from this young, energetic and supremely talented company.