

Arts & Leisure

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DANCE

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

THE CRITICS/10 MOMENTS

Elegiac Splendor and Wild Imagination

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1. 'LA FILLE MAL GARDEE' Sir Frederick Ashton's ballets have a humanity, lyricism and gentle humor that are very English. Indeed, "Fille Mal Gardée" was inspired by Ashton's love for the "luminous and calm" English countryside. But American Ballet Theater triumphed in the 1960 ballet in June at the Metropolitan Opera House, making the production the most joyous event of the dance year.

2. CATHY WEIS'S 'ELECTRIC HAIKU' Cathy Weis has a wild imagination and a belief in using simple materials. In her "Electric Haiku" program at Dance Theater Workshop in November, she communicated the pleasure of following that imagination through multimedia adventures that were food for the eye, mind and heart.

3. JOANNA HAIGOOD'S 'PICTURE RED HOOK' Joanna Haigood and her Zaccho Dance Theater scaled an abandoned 12-story grain terminal in "Picture Red Hook" in August, a haunting and beautiful reanimation of history that also addressed the idea of change.

4. SHANNON HUMMEL'S 'SHORTCOMINGS' In this work, which was presented in September at Dixon Place, three uncommonly committed performers (Vanessa Adato, Anne Smith and Donna Costello) became women caught in vivid private events in choreography as vivid and true



Richard Termine

as a Eudora Welty story.

5. TWO RELATIVELY OLD PROS SHINE Donna Uchizono and Susan Rethorst created career-defining dances this year. Ms. Uchizono's darkly gleaming "Low" was a deconstruction of the tango, presented in March at the DTW Around Town series at the Duke. Ms. Rethorst's "Behold Bold Same Dog," performed in February at the Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, shimmered with her characteristic look of layer upon layer of delicate nuance and color.

6. THE NEW 'DANCE DIVAS' The series opened this month at the Schomburg Center in Harlem with performing and talk by Sarita Allen, Blondell Cummings and Dianne McIntyre that made for one of the richest programs of the year.

7. THE KEEP HOPE ALIVE AWARD 2002 It goes to Thaddeus Davis and Melissa Barak. Mr. Davis's inventive new "Once before, Twice after," presented by Dance Galaxie in June at Symphony Space, and Ms. Barak's airy new "If By Chance," performed by the New York City Ballet this spring, were reassuring evidence of New York dance's promising future.

8. DONALD BYRD LEAVES TOWN Mr. Byrd has trained a generation of exciting do-or-die dancers and disciplined choreographers, among them Mr. Davis. But this year Mr. Byrd tired of the struggle of keeping his company alive in New York and left for Seattle, where he will direct the Spectrum Dance Theater troupe. He will be missed.

9. THE MARTHA GRAHAM DECISION This was the year when the court battle between Ronald Protas, Martha Graham's heir, and the Martha Graham Dance Center over the rights to Graham's work and name finally came to an end, barring appeal. It was a sad spectacle, saved somewhat by the wry humor and clear passion for the law of Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum, the presiding judge.

10. TWYLA THARP'S 'MOVIN' OUT' The choreographer gives an extra boost to the expressive power of pure movement in her Broadway musical, "Movin' Out." True, she had help from Billy Joel, on whose songs this show is based. But even the most devoted dancegoer might be surprised by how much of the goofiness, raw pain and resolution of the Vietnam War era Ms. Tharp captures here in a pirouette.