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With energy, focus and a high degree of professionalism, the young performers of Loco-Motion Dance Theatre dance their way through *Third Rail*, the collaborative choreographic work of fourteen dance members and Lisa Pilato, Loco-Motion's Artistic Director. Showing a range of dance styles, from humorous to provocative, classic modern to postmodern, the dancers, ranging in age from nine to fifteen, demonstrate that Pilato's combination of after-school dance and theater training produces some great young performers.

The concept of *Third Rail*, "to give an audiences a glimpse into the stark and complex world of young people today" through combining "classical, traditional, and cultural forms of dance" hit its mark, showing without a doubt where these kids are coming from. Whether it's two nimble cats, Rosa Bluestone-Perr and Phoebe DeVincenzi, doing the tango in *Caper*, or Lilianna Eisner and Dontae Sawyer getting down and dirty in *Feather*, or the beautiful and expressive Alex Tatarsky as a waif-like firefighter climbing, in resignation, an orange ladder in *The Day the Sky Caught Fire*, it's clear that this is the reality that the young performers want to share...



Pilato's pieces have a wide range, especially in the classic modern style of *Sea Shapes*, with the foam-blue leotard clad unit that breaks apart and comes together like gentle waves, and in the angelic visions of *Graced*, where figures draped in white uplift the frozen dancers in tight black uniforms who seem trapped behind glass...



In the context of *Veiled*, little Alex Tatarsky's *The Day the Sky Caught Fire* provided a gripping example of the pathos and understanding that comes from young people when faced with something like the tragedy of September 11. Choreographed and performed by Tatarsky, *The Day the Sky Caught Fire* begins lightheartedly enough, introducing us to a good-humored, thank-you-Ma'am kind of fireman who is somehow trapped in the tiny body of an eleven-year-old girl with long, blond hair. We see the fireman exercising at the station, passing the time and dancing a jazzy fireman dance. When the music shifts to an edgy Kronos Quartet rendition of Philip Glass and the fire bell rings, something tragic begins to emerge. As Tatarsky pulls a snaking plastic hose across the stage, we begin to sense the fatigue of the fireman. The situation appears to grow more desperate; climbing the ladder, our fireman seems exhausted, then resigned...



Pilato has a gift for helping young people shape their ideas into choreography, and her support for their vision is courageous. Loco-Motion Dance Theatre is a great venue for serious young artists to receive solid training in dance and theater, while being able to explore and implement their own creative visions.

Review by Sophia Ernst