

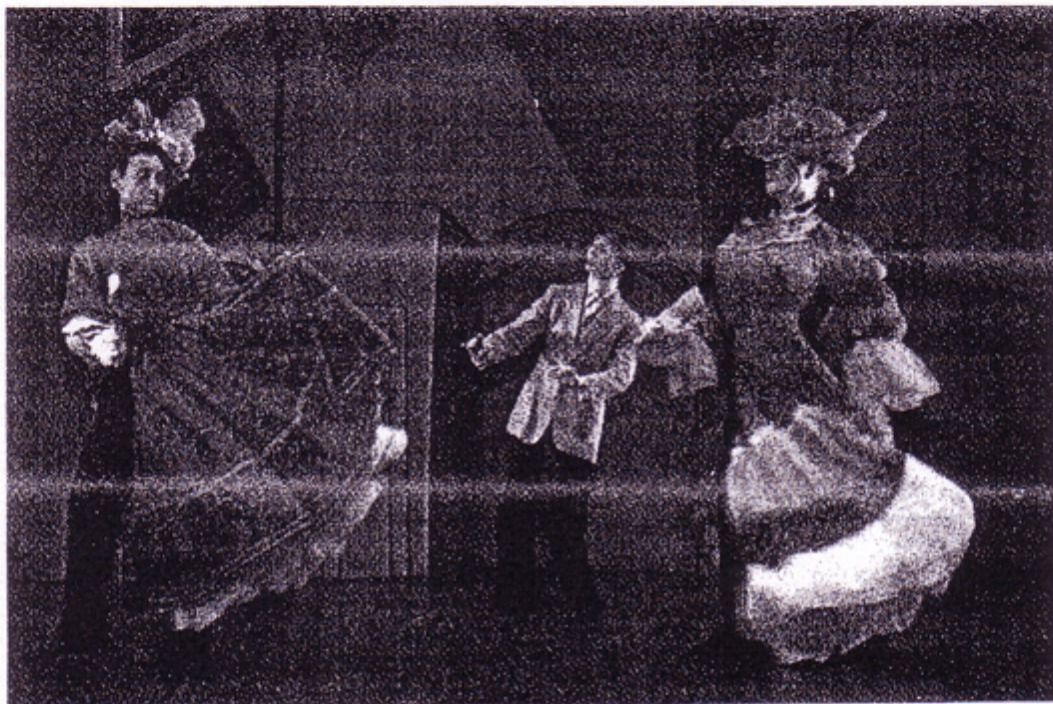
BACK STAGE

THE PERFORMING ARTS WEEKLY

REVIEWS • *Dance*

June 11, 2004

Ariane Anthony & Company: Do I Dare?



Robert Polkosnik

Self-presented at the Henry Street Settlement/Abrons Arts Center Harry DeJur Playhouse, 466 Grand St., NYC, May 14-16.

Ariane Anthony is a dancer-choreographer who has a serious relationship with literature, out of which she evolves penetrating performance pieces. In the most recent of her dance-theatre works, "Do I Dare?," presented at Harry DeJur Playhouse, Anthony took as her inspiration the ambiguous, episodic T.S. Eliot poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and created 70 minutes of modernistic, gender-bending imagery that bespeaks the confusions abounding within the effete Prufrock and his disarranged world.

Though Anthony's portrait of Prufrock is precisely drawn through symbolic gestures, Bill Irwinesque clowning techniques, and eccentric dancing, her portrayal of the role is keenly enhanced by Agata Oleksiak's smart costume designs and John Stone's musical score, in which one clearly "hears" every ache and befuddlement of Prufrock's pitiable personality. Aided also by Roger Predmore's compellingly off-kilter backdrop and by Prufrock's "reflection"—the character's mirror image, which comes to life but is sometimes tauntingly out of sync with what Prufrock wants to do—Anthony intriguingly conveys the mixed-up adventures of Prufrock's narrative.

While she succeeds magnificently in blurring transitions between posturing and pure dance—she strikes evocative, dramatic poses that grow organically into dancing—her choreography is often repetitive, particularly in the work's ensemble sequences. Anthony seems to find just the right vocabulary—group movements that neatly complement or sharply comment upon Prufrock's idiosyncrasies—but instead of developing choreographically, the actions are simply repeated. The frequent restatements of the kinesthetic ideas eventually make the work, though dramatically profound, feel less than gratifying dancewise.

Reviewed by Lisa Jo Sagolla