The high point of the Rioult Dance is the dancers. They move beautifully and they find a way to make each and every transition necessary and clean. Rioult’s lifts, which often stop halfway through their trajectory, are performed effortlessly, the dancers seemingly perched on air. Their energy is filled with breath and is precisely what is needed to perform each part of each ballet to maximum effect, and they clearly enjoy what they are doing.

The newer piece of this hour and a half long program, Fire in the Sky, a premiere, is perhaps a reflection of our times. The young people portrayed, with their flashy costumes and semi-Goth makeup, are seen as in a continual state of hysteria, as they fawn upon a central, besequined figure, rather like a rock star, but one who essentially does nothing to merit all the attention.
In between fawning, the dancers fornicate or take drugs, or dance themselves into hysteria. For all the dancers’ expenditure of effort, one is left with an emptiness inside.

*Fire in the Sky*, contrasts with the piece that opened the evening, *Te Deum*, the piece that Mr. Rioult made twenty-three years ago when he left the Graham Company to found his own. At that time, he needed to explore what it meant to find a new path in one’s life, and that need and the piece it inspired, still rings true.

The central figure traverses, like a sleepwalker, people either frozen in time, or hurriedly going somewhere they appear to be certain of. His strange manner of traversing the stage tells us that he is learning everything again, even how to walk. Over the course of the piece, he flees, fights, then accepts his fears, finally personified by one of the dancers; he is almost swallowed by his ideas before dominating them, then working with them; and he finally finds his way forward.
The choreography, experimenting with the use of groups as opposed to unisons, also shows Mr. Rioults attempt to find movement suited to what he wants to say. This is the best of choreography: Finding the movement that will best express what is inside. It is at those moments of searching that we understand something beyond ourselves. Who has not felt that confusion? Who will not feel it many times along the course of life? The desire and determination to share something that comes from deep inside touched the audience and this reviewer. Te Deum will last: It reminds us that watching the right choreography, performed by the right dancers, those who are able to fulfill the choreographer’s need to share, can make us feel as though we, too, are dancing.

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Joyce Theater
175 Eighth Avenue
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http://theaterscene.com/review-Rioult-Dance-New-York.html