

DANCE REVIEW

Boston Dance Theater's intriguing new work confirms the company's here to stay

By **Jeffrey Gantz** Globe Correspondent, Updated October 23, 2021, 2:56 p.m.



Boston Dance Theater performs "For the Record" SARAH TAKASH

Founded in 2018 by Boston native Jessie Jeanne Stinnett and co-directed by Stinnett and Dutch-Israeli choreographer Itzik Galili, Boston Dance Theater can already boast

a 2018 appearance at Jacob's Pillow's Inside/Out Performance Space and two Global Arts Live presentations at the Institute of Contemporary Art, in [2018](#) and [2019](#). On Friday, Global Arts Live brought the company back to the ICA with a quartet of ambitious and intriguing works.

Two pieces are reprised from the 2019 ICA performances: Micaela Taylor's "I had a thought" and Marco Goecke's "Peekaboo." The other two, Rosie Herrera's "Ofrenda" and Rena Butler's "For the Record," are premieres and the first entries in BDT's "The Carol Kaye Project." Kaye, who's now 86, was playing guitar in Los Angeles jazz clubs when she realized she could make more money from recording sessions. She went on to take part in an estimated 10,000 recordings, primarily on electric bass; her résumé includes the Beach Boys, Sonny & Cher, Ike & Tina Turner, Nancy Sinatra, and Simon & Garfunkel.

"The Carol Kaye Project" proposes to shine a spotlight on her career. Both "Ofrenda" and "For the Record" make use of recordings that Kaye played on. "Ofrenda" incorporates a snatch of session rehearsal; "For the Record" has voice-overs of Kaye reflecting on her career. But neither piece really illuminates this overlooked woman artist.

They hold your attention all the same. One sequence in "Ofrenda," set to Vikki Carr's "It Must Be Him," has Izvel Bello Rodríguez writhing on the floor and acrobatically wriggling out of pieces of clothing. By the end he's shed at least six. His fellow dancers come out with a chair and he sits in it; in short order the scenario acquires a guitar, an LP, two large teddy bears, and a shroud that turns into a bridal veil.



The recordings also include Mel Carter's "Hold Me" and Barbra Streisand's "The Way We Were." At times the choreography looks to be simply illustrating the music, though I would like to have seen more of Stinnett's tender, whimsical solo to "The Way We Were." "Ofrenda" ends with another Stinnett solo, this one accompanied by huge sheets of aluminum foil or mylar blowing in from the wings.

"For the Record" is a little tamer. The recordings here include Frank Sinatra's "Something Stupid" and Kendrick Lamar's "Feel"; the dance styles range from jazz and Latin to hip-hop. Toward the end a woman solos in a spotlight while the other dancers watch. Then we hear Kaye talking, wishing she could have spent more time with her kids but concluding, "Most of the time, they were fine."

"I had a thought" begins with lattice lighting on the floor and the pounding strains of Finnish electronic band Pan Sonic. The jerky repeated voice-over "I had a thought . . . what was it" establishes Taylor's theme of agitation and distraction, but the sudden shifts in choreography and music belabor the point.

"Peekaboo" starts off with one dancer energetically conducting seven others whose faces are hidden behind bowler hats. After a few outbursts from Mieskuoro Huutajat, Finland's shouting male choir, the music settles into Benjamin Britten's "Simple Symphony." The title "Peekaboo" suggests children's games, concealing and revealing, but the piece itself seems more intent on counterpointing Britten's humor, with

dancers in corsets and cummerbunds waving their elbows like pinball flippers, flashing jittery hands and feet, riding imaginary horses. At the outset of the slow movement two of the bowlers even chase each other around the stage floor. It's a fun piece for BDT's accomplished dancers and a fun end to the evening.

BOSTON DANCE THEATER

“Ofrenda,” by Rosie Herrera. “For the Record,” by Rena Butler. “I had a thought,” by Micaela Taylor. “Peekaboo,” by Marco Goecke. Presented by: Global Arts Live. At Institute of Contemporary Art, Barbara Lee Family Foundation Theater, Friday Oct. 22. Remaining performance: Oct. 23. Tickets \$36-\$40. 617-876-4275,

www.globalartslive.org

Jeffrey Gantz can be reached at jeffreymgantz@gmail.com.

[Show comments](#)