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[www.StevenVaughanProperties.com](http://www.StevenVaughanProperties.com), [Svaughan@latterblum.com](mailto:Svaughan@latterblum.com)

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## trodding the boards

by Brian Sands  
Email: [bsnola2@hotmail.com](mailto:bsnola2@hotmail.com)

### New Orleans Ballet Association through May 13, 2017

I hadn't planned on attending the **New Orleans Ballet Association's** presentation of **Grupo Corpo** until I discovered that this was the same dance troupe that appeared in the Olympics Closing Ceremony in Rio de Janeiro earlier this year. They wowed me then with their singular presentation, and they wowed me again during their recent performance at the **Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts**, NOBA's inaugural presentation of the season.

Founded in 1975, Grupo Corpo is lead by brothers Paulo (Artistic Director) and Rodrigo (Choreographer) Pederneiras. The dance vocabulary they impart to their works fuses not only various Brazilian styles but ballroom, modern, a pinch of ballet, and capoeira, Brazil's native acrobatic martial art.

A large company of 21 dancers brought two impressive works to life here with superb technique and a sophisticated sexiness.

In the first, **Suíte Branca** from 2015, Samuel Rosa's pulsing, vibrant score engendered a wonderful combination of the cerebral and the sensual in Cassi Abranches' choreography. Horizontal lines of dancers made their way back-and-forth across the stage, reminding me of Jerome Robbins' **Glass Pieces**.

One was always aware of the individual, both within the company as dancers momentarily broke out of group movements, and in one's own self as Abranches isolated certain body parts with distinct motions. Gravity pulled the agile dancers to the floor (or was it some other force?) but they quickly

#### commentary ...from 28

corporations own 90% of the media outlets in the U.S. (Murdoch's News Corporation, Disney, Viacom, Time-Warner, and Bertelsmann). Noam Chomsky sounded the alarm of the dangers of the corporate owned media in his 1988 landmark book, *Manufacturing Consent*—still essential reading for anyone who cherishes free thinking.

The Founding Fathers realized that a free press was essential preserving democracy. That is why they enshrined the freedom of the press in the First Amendment. The media are supposed to be government watchdogs. But corporations have taken over the media and effectively tamed the watchdog.

The Bernie people preached all along that we need a revolution. And they are right about that. But they err when they assign blame for Trump's victory to a particular candidate or party. The problem is much more complicated than that. Notwithstanding the 204 million Americans who didn't bother to vote, the real blame falls on the failure of our nation's leaders to adequately adapt to the new global economy. Surges in nationalism around the world such as the Brexit vote in England and Trump's victory here are symptoms of a larger problem, namely the need to minimize the economic inequality caused by the concentration of wealth. The real issue is globalism, an inevitable phenomenon that poses



Grupo Corpo in **Suíte Branca**

rose; against Paulo Pederneiras' textured backdrop and his & Gabriel Pederneiras' evocative lighting, there was a suggestion of forms growing and dying in a desert.

incredible opportunities and dangerous risks.

#### An Age-Old Conflict

Trump's presidency may be as dark and horrible as many people fear and thus usher in the revolution so many have called for. Time will tell. In the meantime, we will all have to deal with the catastrophic policies of the Trump and the Republican Party, a prospect so grim that even Bernie himself endorsed Hillary Clinton.

This election was a manifestation of the age-old battle between the ideal and reality. Some voters idealistically voted for the way things ought to be. Other voters, who pragmatically realized that the reality and ideal very seldom match, voted for whom they viewed as the lesser of two evils. In the end, everyone but Big Business loses.

**Suíte Branca** ("White Suite"—Freusa Zechmeister's individualized costumes well-reflected the title) offered spiky same sex pas de deux and a dynamic quartet for three men and a woman. As the dancers formed and reformed patterns filigreed with phenomenal lifts and flips, **Suíte Branca** provided 35 minutes of hypnotic delight.

**Dança Sinfônica** conveyed a different visual atmosphere, one of seductive elegance with blood red curtains on either side of the stage, the women attired in similarly colored leotards, and the men in black.

Created last year to celebrate Grupo Corpo's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Rodrigo Pederneiras' choreography references works from the company's decades-long repertoire. Inspired by composer Marco Antônio Guimarães' compelling symphony, the dancers at times expressed joyful abandon, at others solemn grace.

A huge panel made up of hundreds of snapshots of the multitude of people

technical precision, power and passion. The year will conclude on May 13 with the return of **Jessica Lang Dance**; the evening will feature Lang's poignant **Thousand Yard Stare**, honoring veterans and those touched by the aftermath of war, and **Tesseract of Time**, her collaboration with architect Steven Holl which uses striking architectural elements and projections.

#### Curtains Up

With a few exceptions (see below, plus the final weekend of **Southern Rep's Grounded at Loyola's Lower Depths Theatre**), the best drama during the coming Thanksgiving Day weekend will probably be around the family dinner table.

If you survive that, then theatrical presents, both holiday-related and non-, await you during the final weeks of the year.

In the booming Avant-Garden District, **Rainbolt Cypher, The World Tour** touches down at **The Art Klub** (1941 Arts Street) December 1-11. Nari Tomassetti's musical theater event/concert party promises an intimate look into multi-platinum, multi-talented icon Rainbolts' turbulent life of drugs and dirty secrets.

In 2012, I found Tomassetti's **Shanghai!** to be "one of the wildest musicals this city has seen in years, an evening filled with delights." Chris Wecklein, Allee Peck, Owen Ever, and Matt Bell & His Orchestra, who were all part of that extravaganza, are back in **Rainbolt Cypher**. Here's hoping lightning bolts will strike twice.

It's Christmas and a patriarch has three sons. He wants what he rules over to stay united after his death, but all three boys have aspirations to be top dog. Sound familiar? A hit TV show, you say? Nope, it's James Goldman's **The Lion in Winter**, which Lee Daniels and Danny Strong did indeed base **Empire** partly upon.

**See 'Em On Stage: A Production Company** will be presenting this award-winning drama, that's often biting funny, December 1-18 at the **Sanctuary Cultural Arts Center** (2525 Burgundy Street). Leslie Castay and Kevin Murphy, as Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Henry II of England, head up a cast which also includes Alec Barnes, Alex Martinez Wallace, Eli Timm, Jake Wynne-Wilson, and Kali Russell all under the direction of Christopher Bentivegna.

Always providing terrific fun, **Broadway@NOCCA** continues on December 15 with Tony-nominee **Gavin Creel** (**Hair, Thoroughly Modern Millie**). Expect host Seth Rudetsky to question this Olivier Award-winner (for **The Book of Mormon** in London's West End) about his upcoming co-starring turn with Bette Midler in the Broadway revival of **Hello Dolly!**...and

[continued on 39]



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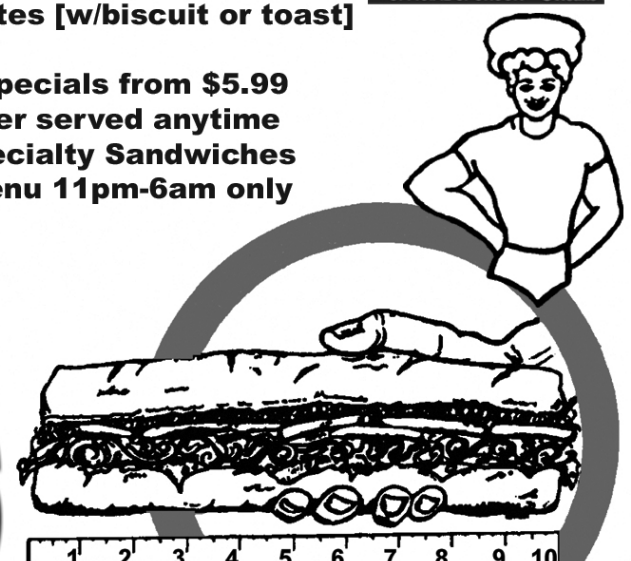
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