

Trisha Brown Dance Company & Noé Soulier review - perfect poses and brilliant bounce

★★★★☆

Sadler's Wells, London

Pairing Brown's classic Working Title with Soulier's recent In the Fall shows off both choreographers' highly skilled simplicity



📷 Gathering power ... scene from In The Fall by Noé Soulier, performed by Trisha Brown Dance Company at Sadler's Wells. Photograph: Tristram Kenton/The Guardian

In these times of shrinking arts budgets, in steps high-end jewellery brand Van Cleef and Arpels to curate and sponsor an impressively wide-ranging festival of 15 performances across four weeks in London, called [Dance Reflections](#) (there have been editions in Hong Kong, Japan and the US too). Tonight's opening show sets out the intention: to honour classics of 20th-century dance, and introduce current artists following in their slipstream.

Here, Working Title, from 1985, by the great postmodern choreographer Trisha Brown (who died in 2017) is paired with a recent piece from French choreographer Noé Soulier, made for Brown's company. Soulier's piece, [In the Fall](#), is full of Trisha Brown-ness. It opens with the dancers in long, still poses, bodies making sharp V-shapes or finely tuned angles. They balance, they lean, they inevitably fall. They create perfect forms and yet at the same time they're so human: all that impossible striving, all the failure, and the keeping-trying.

The solos and duos build to a mesmerising mass of movers on stage, who lunge, lean, hop, fold and push forward - you can see the weight travelling through their bodies. There's a gathering power and a clarity that is utterly satisfying.



📷 Ease and naturalness ... Working Title by Trisha Brown Dance Company. Photograph: Joyce Baranova

Working Title is built on a similar highly skilled simplicity, with purposeful angles and casual bounce. There's ease and naturalness at the same time as absolute command of the material. Some of the movement is improvised, apparently, but it feels logical, as if someone had a plan. There's none of the mild anxiety of watching dance where you're wondering what's going on. It just is. And it invites you to just be.

The music, by composer Peter Zummo, keeps introducing new ideas, phrases phasing in and out, much as the dancers do. It's like a walk in nature - Look at this! Look at that! Listen! - or people-watching in the city. The world changes around us: duos, trios and different groupings, there's concord (never discord) and counterpoint. And there's a brightness too, an uncynical nature to the work. It feels hopeful. Onwards, they keep dancing, keep moving - as we all must.