May, 7-8, 2022

Beth Soll & Company presents "Earthly Dances in Troubled Times"

Company: Beth Soll & Company
Venue: Westbeth Center for the Arts
Location: New York, NY

Film: Two Red Solos, A Formal Response

BETH SOLL & COMPANY TO PREMIERE FOUR DANCES AND A NEW FILM AT WESTBETH CENTER FOR THE ARTS - CELEBRATING THE 50-YEAR AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HERSELF AND HER DANCERS

Choreographer/Dancer Beth Soll, Artistic Director of Beth Soll & Company, will present *Earthly Dances in Troubled Times*, a concert of four new works and a film at Westbeth Center for the Arts, 55 Bethune Street, NYC. The program will take place on Saturday May 7 and Sunday May 8 at 8pm. Tickets: sollearthlydances.brownpapertickets.com and at box office prior to performance.*Full program below.*

Celebrating the 50-year age difference between herself and her dancers, the two evenings will feature the premiere of *Red Duet*, a live spin-off of Ms. Soll's film, *Two Red Solos, A Formal Response*, which will also be shown. Both works were created in response to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dancers appear in the film in two separate solos, one for company member Abby Dias and another for dancer/choreographer Beth Soll, in separate frames or socially distanced in one frame. Filming took place in 2020 outside, amidst the greenery of Hudson River Park. The vibrant red of the costumes contrast with the lush green of the park. In *Red Duet*, the live version of the film, Ms. Soll shares the stage with Ms. Dias, using geometric clarity and a thoughtful balance of athleticism and subtle, gesture-based movement.

The other works to be shown echo aspects of the film, including its movement vocabulary, the tension between separation and connection, and the co-existence of formal restraint and emotional expressivity.

According to dance critic Deborah Jowitt, who viewed the film in preview:*"What makes this duet especially interesting—even moving—are the subtle distinctions between the two performers. Hard to believe though it is, Soll is about fifty years older than Dias. If they raise both hands to frame their faces, or lean down to touch the ground, they seem like twins, but they approach certain larger moves in individual ways.... Two red solos. The performers' responses to the title may be formal, and the two of them never touch. But their simultaneous solos seethe with the implications of togetherness and isolation that at present shape our daily lives."* - Arts Journal, Read more.

Seating is limited; health and safety protocols, currently in transition, will be in effect. Protocols as per NYC guidelines to be determined.

* Full Program (subject to change):

Spell II (premiere), Solo for Beth Soll. This dance grew out of two earlier solos, one from 1979 and another from 2016. It suggests a sense of immersion in a private, almost visionary place of sensuous introspection, expressed in both kinetic dancing and idiosyncratic gestural movement accompanied by the evocative music of Boston's celebrated jazz musician Stan Strickland and the equally accomplished Josh Rosen.

Red Duet (premiere) a live version of the film, "Two Red Solos, A Formal Response." The choreography departs from the restrictions of the separate frames in the film and allows for more intimacy between the dancers than in the film, as well as a sense of vigorous, athletic freedom. Music: prepared tape of nature sounds by the film's cinematographer Ethan Mass.

Wellspring (premiere), Solo for Abby Dias. The choreography of this piece makes references to the other dances in the program and focuses on Abby's youthful, hopeful energy, her natural dramatic sense, and her technical skill. The dance is accompanied by the highly original, evocative music by experimental jazz artist, Jeff Platz.

Folk Dance: A Restless Fugue. Duet for Abby Dias and Brianna Lux. This dance makes reference to the traditional folk dance of Eastern Europe and to the embroidered patterns on folk costumes. The dancers move from upstage to downstage with one movement pattern and then move back upstage with another pattern, sometimes deviating from their straight paths. Parts of the dance are performed in unison, but much of it is performed as a fugue or canon, in which one person starts, and the other dancer later joins in with different movement. As the dance develops, the dancers deviate from the rigid lines of the embroidery and dance together or in opposition, which both enriches and undermines the conventions of folk dance and evokes a sense of the aesthetic power, passionate emotions, and suggestions of conflict that are often implicit in traditional dances. Music for the dance is by Param Vir, a British composer originally from India and performed live by noted New York pianist Kathryn Woodard.

Film: Two Red Solos, A Formal Response - the dancers appear in separate frames or socially distanced in one frame. The film was shot outside amidst the greenery of Hudson River Park. For the film Soll worked to reveal and celebrate the 50-year age difference between her and Abby Dias and to locate it within a geometric clarity and thoughtful balance of athleticism and subtle, gesture-based movement. The vibrant red of the costume's contrasts with the lush green of the park. Cinematographer: Ethan Mass. Editing: Ethan Mass and Beth Soll.

ABOUT BETH SOLL

Beth Soll is the Artistic Director of Dance Projects, Inc./Beth Soll & Company. Beth Soll began her dance training in the U.S. with the Romanian dancer Iris Barbura and continued abroad in Germany and Switzerland. She has performed with many dance companies and has frequently collaborated with artists in all disciplines. She received a bachelor's degree in modern dance from the U. of Wisconsin and later a Ph.D from Boston University. With her company, which was formed in 1977, she has performed in many U.S. locations and abroad in Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Romania, and Russia. She has been honored with many grants and awards from the NEA and from state, civic, and private sources. Since the 1960s, she has been teaching people in varied contexts and in universities, including MIT, where she directed the Dance Program for 20 years, the Harvard Summer Dance Center, Boston University, UC Santa Barbara, Hofstra University, Manhattanville College, and the University of Wisconsin. Her book, Will Modern Dance Survive? Lessons to be Learned from the Pioneers and Unsung Visionaries of Modern Dance was published in 2002. Bethsollandcompany.org

Now in her late seventies and still dancing, Soll's very individual style has earned enthusiastic praise throughout the years:

"Gentle, unusual, luminous...iconic purity...thoughtful, beguiling dance."

Deborah Jowitt, The Village Voice

"This is dance at its most magical, mystical, mysterious."

Cerina Survant, Chicago Reader

"A distinguished, absorbing, and deeply satisfying concert."

David Vaughan, Dance Magazine

"...volatile, thrilling, both kinesthetically and spiritually, and altogether magnificent."

Christine Temin, The Boston Globe

Beth Soll & Company
55 Bethune Street Corner of Bethune St. and Washington St.
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http://sollearthlydances.brownpapertickets.com

Schedule
May 7, 2022: 8:00pm
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