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Dance Review | ODC/San Francisco

## In a Political Climate, Ice Melts by Moonlight

By GIA KOURLAS

ODC/San Francisco has existed for many years as a big fish in a relatively small pond. Formed in 1971 in Oberlin, Ohio, the troupe has made its home since 1976 in San Francisco, where the artistic director Brenda Way oversees a company of 10. The three works presented Tuesday at the Joyce Theater hinted, subtly or otherwise, at social issues; the choreography didn't particularly stand out. But there was one knockout dancer who did: Anne Zivolich.

"RingRoundRozi," created by KT Nelson, whose title is co-artistic director, begins with dancers lounging at the front of the stage in practice clothes. As David Finn's stark lighting and Linda Bouchard's score evoke an ominous atmosphere, dancers splinter off into largely conventional duets and trios that frequently fall short of mirroring the mood.

The exception is a poignant duet for Justin Flores and Ms. Zivolich, who, in a series of daring lifts, manage to infuse the choreography with a darting, candid musicality.

The second work, Ms. Way's "24 Exposures" takes its base from Edgar Meyer's music. Repeating motifs - attitude turns and arabesques - are performed with perfunctory skill, and attempts at whimsy seem forced.

The most substantial work on the program, Ms. Way's "On a Train Heading South," set to a score by Jack Perla, is mesmerizing at times, mainly for its moonlit setting and the presence of Ms. Zivolich. The deceptively simple set, by Alexander V. Nichols, includes 12 blocks of ice that hang like a rainbow over the stage. Focusing on environmental issues, the work features Ms. Zivolich as a loner with a passionate point to make even when her fellow dancers seem too preoccupied to care. Snippets of speeches by President Bush and the sight of male brides crossing the stage suggest Ms. Way's frustration with the political climate.

But less obvious is the way the set and lighting convey nature at its most serene. Against a milky-white backdrop, dancers are transformed into shadowy phantoms. The stage, veiled in silvery blue lighting, shimmers like a skating rink. When the music subsides and the only sound is the steady beat of melting ice, Ms. Way has made her point.

ODC/San Francisco continues through Sunday at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, at 19th Street; (212) 242-0800.