

Rebecca Kelly Ballet 25 Seasons in the Adirondacks

LAKE PLACID VISITORS BUREAU Submitted by [Athena Roth](#) on Aug 07, 2011

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[Rebecca Kelly Ballet](#) is contemporary 6-10 member ensemble based in SoHo in New York City that has performed and taught throughout the US and Europe since 1980 – and, fortunately for us, has called Lake Placid its summer home since 1987. Drawing from a repertoire of over 70



ballets, RKB features contemporary classical dance and ballets performed on pointe, with "undulating torsos, coils and spirals, curving arms, and surprising off-center balances." The company has been featured on television, NPR and the New York Times. Rebecca Kelly describes her work as "abstract and narrative ballets which convey her humanistic outlook, fusing classical dance with modern forms resulting in an arresting lyrical yet earthy quality."

It had been far too long since I'd seen some top-notch professional movement and dance, so I was pleased to have the chance

to see Rebecca Kelly's new work "Living Lightly on the Earth," at the [Lake Placid Center for the Arts](#) on Thursday. I settled into my seat, but I hadn't glanced at my program yet; I was happily surprised when the curtain rose to reveal student members of the Onstage Performance Camp – a two week camp program that prepares young dancers for the stage – energetically and

excitedly dancing an Irish Tartan as a prologue to the main event. It was a great way to get the audience in a joyful state of mind for the work to come.



[Rebecca Kelly Ballet](#) ensemble members Raul Peinado and Therese Wendler then danced the piece "Air" from the company's "Adirondack Elemental," said to be inspired by the "fragility of our wilds." I found it very delicate and moving: the grace with which Peinado guided Wendler's foot to the floor at one point, the delicate, fluid blue dress on Wendler, and the powerful music by Martha Gallagher. I could have watched it again and again.

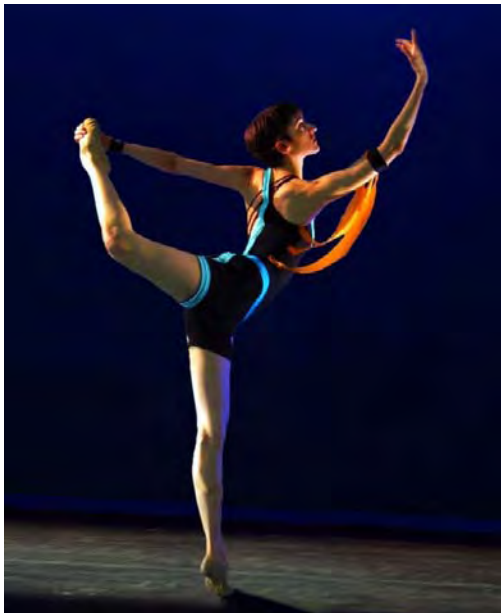
The next piece entitled, "Wilderness Suite Ballet" was said to have the same inspiration as "Air" and was performed by Giorgia Bovo and Carol Renedo. The music in this by Richard Adler filled the room with a rich intensity – the tolling of a bell reminded me of the darkness and consequences that lie in the fragility of our Adirondack wilderness. "Dances from the Rim" was performed by Rebecca Kelly Ballet staff member Hilary Brashear and Onstage Intern Student, Emily



Badeau. It was done to contemporary South Pacific fusion music and was created for RBK's Teen Group "as a means to study the music, rhythms, and storytelling hand movements from the cultures of the Pacific Rim." This piece had such a joyful, effervescent energy — like the bubbles and steam rising explosively from lava hitting the sea.

The last piece I saw Thursday night was a premier, "Apayaana," danced by Giorgia Bovo, Carol Renedo, Raul Peinado and Therese Wendler to a music collage by Craig Brashear using natural sounds mixed with music by Guimaraes, Shostakovich and Gorecki. "Apayaana" derives from a Sanskrit word meaning flight — as in retreat. Choreographer

Rebecca Kelly told me she was inspired by studying Sanskrit at the University of Pennsylvania while a student at Bryn Mawr College. "This ballet came out of my observation that the pattern of natural things was shifting. I appreciate the extreme regularity of the patterns nesting phoebes, or the feeding or flight of hummingbirds and butterflies because I like to photograph them for my 'Living Lightly on the Earth' series of images," said Kelly.



She also said climate change was the thought behind this ballet and that "the awareness of global warming and climate change lurks in the back of all our minds like sand running through an hourglass." I loved the arc of the piece and how there was a soft opening with the dancers seeming to awaken in fluttery, butterfly-like movements. This led to an increasing intensity in music and dance, until the dancers seemed driven from the stage by a beautiful combination of natural sounds, music and modern movement. I recognized in the movements and sounds our Adirondack environment and the changes going on around us. "We have a responsibility to lessen our footprint on this earth," said Kelly, "to stop focusing our economies on growth and start thinking about survival and embracing local, inventive smaller-scale ways of living, like it or not." It

was a wonderful, thought provoking evening of dance and if you get the chance be sure to check out a Rebecca Kelly Ballet performance. With their wonderful combination of a variety of styles and music — you won't be disappointed.

To find out about upcoming performances from Rebecca Kelly Ballet, check our website at Lakeplacid.com. To find out more about the Company check their website at <http://www.rebeccakellyballet.com>.

