

Rebecca Kelly Ballet may be a small company, but you know what they say: good things come in small packages. This statement holds true for the Manhattan based troupe, which was founded in 1979 by Rebecca Kelly and her husband Craig Brashear. As artistic director and sole choreographer, Kelly combines classical ballet, modern and contemporary to create works that are accessible, humanistic and feminine.



Robin Cantrell and Sean Scantlebury in 'Desire' Photo by Todd Bissonette

The company premiered two new works, "Trouve Moi" and "Desire," on April 22-24 at the Ailey Citigroup Theater/Joan Weill Center for Dance in New York City. "The Travelers," a fan favorite choreographed by Kelly in 2001, was brought back and restaged for another run.

The show began with "Trouve Moi," a romantic duet performed by Therese Wendler and Raul Peinado, and the timing couldn't have been more perfect—everything about "Trouve Moi," which is danced to music for cello and piano by Brazilian composer Egberto Gismonti, embodies the sweetness of spring. Watching "Trouve Moi" is like witnessing two young lovers frolic on a Sunday jaunt in the park. Their romance is pure and uncomplicated—exactly what love should be like in a perfect world. Wendler looks stunning in her sunny yellow dress, which showcases her beautiful feet and extensions. Bare legs and ballet slippers give the work a diminutive quality, and Kelly's choreography is just as demure. "Trouve Moi" is not about big lifts, multiple pirouettes or flashy tricks, but rather

capturing that fleeting moment when you first fall in love.

"The Travelers," set to the music of Craig Mix, was the perfect juxtaposition, showcasing Kelly's darker, more mysterious side. Sharp, angular, pulsating and repetitive, this work tells the story of lonely people in transit and their short-lived, anonymous encounters while on the road. Kelly uses chairs to represent the locomotive, but the dancers don't sit for very long—they're on their feet, coming together and splitting after moments of intense partnering. Their faces remain stoic even as the pulsating club music continues to build. As long as the company continues performing "The Travelers" with such intensity and commitment, it will remain the most celebrated work in the Rebecca Kelly repertoire.



'The Travelers' Photo by Adrian Buckmaster

"Desire," another Rebecca Kelly world premiere, rounded out the show. Program notes indicate that all forms of desire are addressed, from unrequited love to unwanted affection, and even being disconnected from your own wants and needs. Dressed appropriately in red, the six dancers explore the many facets of desire through highly skilled partnering. Robin Cantrell and Sean Scantlebury are an unstoppable force, executing effortless lifts and creating sharp lines. When Scantlebury dances with Wendler, the partnering hits a new level—it's completely fearless. Emily SoRelle Adams is strong and clean in her solo, and members of the ensemble hold their own despite coming from different skill sets and backgrounds. "Desire" left me wanting more.