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The Listings; CAROLYN DORFMAN DANCE COMPANY

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Manhattan dance fans are notorious for their lack of curiosity about what goes on west of the Hudson River. But choreographers are working there, too, and sometimes that distance from the hectic world of New York dance can be a very healthy thing. Carolyn Dorfman, who is based in Union, New Jersey, seems to have benefited from the distance, for her work glows with the quiet authority of someone who burrows comfortably into material that interests her, whether fashionable or not. Trained at the University of Michigan and the New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Ms. Dorfman does a lot of

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teaching, some of it as a guest at the Limon Institute in Manhattan. She has also worked to develop dance in New Jersey institutions. She is probably best known these days for

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dances that explore Jewish lives and legacies. A humanist, she offers her audiences the dance equivalent of a cherished book of family photographs. There will be other kinds of pieces on the program presented by the 23-year-old Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company this weekend, one of them by Aidan Treays, a guest choreographer from England. But Ms. Dorfman's new “Odisea” will chronicle the journey of 23 Jews fleeing persecution in mid-17th century Brazil for the unfamiliar world of New Amsterdam (New York City). Her 2002 “Echad (One)” examines ideas about humanity and individuality in the light of writings on pre-biblical life, the Jewish liturgy and evolving theology and philosophy. The dancers' bodies, above, will very likely look sculptured, as a group forming a flow of images that directly communicate emotions like hope, resignation, uncertainty and joy with the chewy simplicity of good bread.



Photo: Tom Caravaglia