



BWW Reviews: EVIDENCE, A DANCE COMPANY Tells Stories at the BRIC HOUSE

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by Frances Steiner



BRIC House and **Evidence** are institutions that tell stories. BRIC tells Brooklyn's cultural story through exhibitions, performances, residencies, and community media programs. **Evidence** tells the story of the African diaspora through a unique mixture of contemporary movement, African dance, and the spoken word. It is no wonder that the two institutions are partnering together through a three-year residency for **Ronald K. Brown**, **Evidence's** artistic director (a Brooklyn resident) at BRIC.

Order my Steps, the first work presented, told the story of a man who loses his way and finds himself later through God. **Ronald Brown's** choreography expertly expanded and built on this simple concept. Brown used repeated, undulating movements to emphasize the cyclical nature of a downward spiral. He gave each company member a moment of individuality in order to emphasize the universality of this story. Further, different dancers throughout the piece played the role of the protagonist. *Order my Steps* was powerful because the protagonist is one of us—he is all of us.

Unfortunately, *One Shot: Rhapsody in Black and White*, was less successful. It centered on the story of Charles "Teenie" Harris, a photographer who chronicled the black community of Pittsburgh from 1936 to 1975. The dancers' movements were contrasted with Harris' photographs projected onto the scrim. However, Brown's choreography meandered through Harris' world and wasn't focused, which left the piece feeling long and drawn out. This was exacerbated by a five-minute pause when the company changed costumes. During this time, the house lights came on, the audience checked their phones and started chatting, leaving it difficult to stay emotionally connected to *One Shot* when the conclusion began.

Brown's choreography is dynamic and quite unique in the contemporary dance field. His work moves dance forward by telling stories, not only of individuals but of a community at large. Even though the final work of the evening was less effective than the first, BRIC's audience left upbeat to mingle with Brown in the lobby.

Photo credit: David Andrako