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<p> Stevenramm.biddingfortravel</p>	<p> Philadanco at the Kimmel Center "HavingOur Say.." - A review</p>			<p>Lead [-]</p>
<p></p> <p>Posts: 274 3 days ago</p>	<p>Last night at the intimate (well, compared with much larger performance space at the Annenberg Center), Philly's own world-renowned dance company – PHILADANCO – showed why the city should be so proud of them. Celebrating their 45th year as a company, and headed by its Artistic Director Joan Myers Brown (who still runs her dance studio after 55 years!) their spring program – titled “Having Our Say” features four pieces choreographed by women (and adds a fifth number an excerpt from Donald McKayle’s <i>Rainbow Round My Shoulder</i> -danced to a recording of the folk song “Nora’s Dove”). The first half of the evening featured two world premieres, one each by veteran choreographer Dionne McIntyre and a former Philadanco dancer, Dawn Marie Bozmore. Bozmore’s creation, <i>A Movement for Five</i>, was based on the events surrounding the Central Park Five event in New York (she was born and raised in Brooklyn). The third movement of the piece is titled <i>Exonerat^on?</i>(with the question mark revealing that the choreographer is not certain whether the police panel ever exonerated the five young black men from their criminal charges.</p> <p>After Intermission two pieces (plus the aforementioned <i>Rainbow</i>) which were not new to the company, but which they never performed in their hometown showed, again, the amazing talents of the company’s 13 dancers. Brown likes to include “pop music” in nearly every show (better to draw in young audiences and those who may think of “dance” as elitist – trust me, with Philadanco performances it is anything but!) but, as a primarily African American troupe, it usually jazz or soul music. You’d hardly expect a piece with a Led Zeppelin recording as its soundtrack. Surprise! For <i>My Science</i> a compilation of short pieces by Bebe Miller (an instructor at Ohio State) the score starts with a recording by the Bulgarian vocal group La Voix Bulgare and melds into Led Zep’s song “Cashmere”. The evening’s closer – <i>Hands Singing Song</i> – not only has the full troupe using fist pumps and hand slaps during some otherwise silent moments, but includes musical clips from “While World in His Hands” and “The Hokey Pokey” (I guess choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, director of the company Urban Bush Women, couldn’t get the rights to “Willie and the Hand Jive”). Though the piece is 14 years old – and the aforementioned Bozmore and another of the current Philadanco ensemble danced in a performance back then in Poland – it still holds up today.</p> <p>It seems that Friday night performances (there are also two on Saturdays and a matinee on Sunday) seem to be less full, those are best nights to come. Brown hosts a brief “talkback” in the theater immediately following the performance. Last night both of the choreographers of the first half’s world premieres were there to answer audience questions (including some insightful ones from some kids in the audience. This “addendum” made the special evening even more “special”.</p> <p>There’s still time to catch the company this weekend but, if you miss it, go put their fall dates on your calendar. I don’t know what the program will be but Brown’s track record for exciting and accessible performances is quite high.</p> <p>Steve Ramm</p>			