

## DANCE IN REVIEW

### **A Childhood World Comes Alive In Images of Dreaming Flight**

*Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects  
Dixon Place*

Is it possible to tell a fairy tale in a nonlinear yet evocative way? Jody Oberfelder comes close in "The Story Thus Far," which Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects performed on Saturday night.

The 17 short dances in the piece, set to music that ranges from Schubert, Schumann and Lou Harrison to Radiohead and the Klezmatics, draw their titles, program quotations and tones from fairy tales by the Grimm Brothers. But the dances do not illustrate the stories, though they are at their best, for the most part, when they are least abstract. The high point of "The Story Thus Far" comes with the first five dances in the second half of the piece, which bring a childhood world to magical life in part through images of dreaming flight in the partnering.

The piece evokes dark forests, treacherous quests and children, guided at times by a sad-faced good fairy, who are lost, naughty, sad or rambunctiously happy. Ms. Oberfelder does this with a few set pieces and tiny props, among them a plate of cookies with a miniature house on it and several impossibly red apples. Her selection of music, which also includes original scores by Frank London and Kitty Brazelton, is adroit. And it is hard to imagine more perfect dancers for this piece. All of them look as if they had stepped out of a German storybook, their antic, expressive faces and bodies lending extra color to Ms. Oberfelder's often acrobatic dance.

Jessica Loof sets the tone with a strange opening solo in which she becomes almost possessed, in a remarkably equable way, by the book in her hands. Storme Sundberg

is a bewitching, free-moving imp. Sara Joel is a creamily unblemished princess. Brian Caggiano is a solid-bodied sprite, and Matthew Thornton resembles a woodcarver's craggy doll. His bit with some Idaho potatoes is typical of Ms. Oberfelder's wonderfully nutty imagination and sense of humor. And Ms. Oberfelder is a darting, unruly spirit with glitteringly alive eyes.

Miche Kimsa's costumes were fairy tale garb rugged enough for hard dancing. The set was designed by Juergen Riehm and Tine Kindermann, the singing good fairy and clearly a visual artist with a fine sense of mystery. Diane Fairchild designed the atmospheric lighting.

"The Story Thus Far" will be repeated through Saturday at Dixon Place (309 East 26th Street, Manhat-tan).

JENNIFER DUNNING