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## **Pearson Widrig Dance Theater at Dance Place**

By Sarah Halzack

When the dancers of Pearson Widrig Dance Theater fall to the ground, it's rarely with a soft, sensible landing. Rather, their risky balances, flailing leaps and floor-grazing slides all seem to come crashing down in a glorious, bone-rattling thud.

This propensity for big, sweeping movement that ultimately ends in a heap on the floor exemplifies what choreographers Sara Pearson and Patrik Widrig are all about — taking chances and testing the human body's limits.

The company's Saturday performance at Dance Place included two ensemble works, "Oashisu" and "Drama." The first was a collection of smartly-edited solos, duets and trios that culminated in a full-cast finale.

For "Drama," the stage was lined with a border of stacked pebbles, which the dancers carefully stepped or jumped over until the work's surprising climax. At that point, the performers briefly disappeared into the wings, and a deluge of rocks tumbled down from above stage. The dancers then hurdled back onstage, this time wrecking the precise ring of stones they'd been avoiding. It was a provocative tableau, although perhaps it took a bit too long to arrive there.

The linchpin of this work was Tzveta Kassabova, a tall, long-limbed dancer with a steely gaze and wild tangle of curly brown hair. Program notes indicate that her improvisations helped build a foundation for the choreography, and it shows. In her performance, every step looked intuitive, assured and pure. She's appealing to watch because nothing she does is safe, and yet she is always in control.

The program also featured the world premiere of "Sayonara, Dear," a solo dance-theater work performed by Pearson. A candid rumination on the parent-child relationship and how it changes as the parent approaches death, it was the intimate kind of piece that works perfectly in a small theater like Dance Place.