

# Attack Theatre triumphs with trio of premieres

## REVIEW

BY MARK KANNY

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The creativity of Attack Theatre was exhilarating to experience Friday night at the New Hazlett Theater in the North Side, in three riveting premieres, each in a different style, and the welcome return of a repertory piece.

The atmosphere was thick at the start of the show — literally, with stage fog — as Attack Theatre presented “The Lady from Arles,” inspired by the fun the dancers had performing to Georges Bizet’s music for “Carmen” and “L’Arlesienne” at the Pittsburgh Symphony Holiday Pops.

Narrator Cecile Desandre’s tasty French accent set up the story of the lady who is unfaithful to her lover, who takes it badly and commits suicide, to her ineradicable regret. Large umbrellas were props for the beautifully costumed dancers to express the exhilaration of passion and its pain. The performance was fluid and felt spontaneous, but crisply locked into the music’s beat.

Bizet’s music was freshly conceived by musical director

## ‘Preserve and Pursue’

**Produced by:** Attack Theatre

**When:** 8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday

**Admission:** \$20 in advance; \$24 at the door; \$15 for students and seniors

**Where:** New Hazlett Theater, North Side

**Details:** 412-394-3353

David Egarr, and performed with wonderful expressive nuances by a small ensemble. The one problem was the drummer’s heavy-handed rock style during Bizet’s exquisite lyricism.

“Ralph” offered a different context for a relationship, that of a father and son, and is dedicated to the father of the company’s co-director, Peter Kope. It was premiered in 2006 and was good to revisit. Kope, as the older man, and Jeff Davis offered nuanced portrayals to excellent original music by Egarr.

The premieres after intermission featured music commissioned by Attack Theatre from two highly contrasted Japanese composers.

“A Furious Wind” was based on the Japanese myth of Raijin, god of thunder and wind, who was said in the program notes to have “an insatiable appetite for belly buttons.” Dancer Liz Chang preserved her belly button as she was pursued by Michelle de la Reza and Ashley Williams. Miyuki Ito’s music featured Egarr playing a ferociously virtuosic solo cello part combined with flamboyant computer sounds the composer generated on her computer.

The evening reached an extraordinary climax in “Trapped,” which was performed to the Piano Trio that Somei Satoh wrote for Attack Theatre. His music was extremely slow and, thus, functioned as an almost timeless context for the choreography, which moved in normal time. The dancers presented the curves of human relationships, including outright rejection, with Satoh’s music providing an exquisite commentary on our often-futile search for meaning and happiness. His music functioned for me as a commentary by nature on the human condition from a perspective that spanned centuries.

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