

GLASGOW HERALD

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Mitchell Theatre,
Glasgow
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Allegro Vivace

THREE young women are eyeing each other somewhat cagely. It's the kind of look you intercept in communal changing rooms, or see darting among teenage girls at dances. Here it leads into little shows of strutting dressage, brilliantly emphasised by clever costuming — the dancers each start out wearing short-hooped overskirts that they use rather like fans, opening and shutting the stiffened material around them in significant gestures of confidence, aggression or even retreat (when the skirts are pulled over the face).

What follows is a marvellously perceived, frequently witty, kaleidoscope of female action, reaction and interaction. There, in Adriana Borriello's cleverly varied choreography, is the whole gamut of being pretty, being pretty insecure . . . of fearing other women (rivals?), needing other women . . . of being passive or, defensively, aggressive.

There's no obvious narrative to the piece but as one watches Borriello and her companions (Roser Montllo and Clelia Moretti) deftly moving through sequences of neatly contained single work or delightfully zesty ensembles full of open, hoydenish turns and stretches before coming, abruptly, into a mutually supporting flop, all kinds of images and scenarios suggest themselves.

The dancers' own youthful appearance prompt thoughts of schoolgirl friendships and playground games with their rules and cabals. But the work reflects more than a girlish coming-to-terms with female roles. The costumes, (their discardable layers cunningly compiled by Anne Frere, are Fragonard flounces by way of Body map) suggest an interesting historical perspective gently echoed in occasional slivers of courtly dance — the movement mix is delightfully rich.

The piece is immensely charming, as full of vitality and eye-catching imagery as it is teeming with stimulating ideas. The Mayfest dance programme has given three premieres this week, each one very different in style and content, each one in itself quite surprising — all three have been tremendously rewarding, a tribute to the excellent planning that has brought such interesting dance out of Europe and into Glasgow.