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# Abt's 'Enough Said' Debuts With Vigor

February 06, 1987 | By Richard Christiansen, Entertainment editor. — Chicago Tribune

As a choreographer, Clark Tippet seems to have sprung full-bodied from Terpsichore's forehead. "Enough Said," which had its premiere at the Chicago performance Thursday night in the Auditorium Theatre, it is his first choreographic work and his first work for American Ballet Theatre; but it's a work of such confident verve and invention that it's hard to believe he's a neophyte in the field.

Set to the itchy, arresting Serenade No. 3 for piano and chamber orchestra, by George Perle (who was in the audience Thursday), the piece is performed by two principals and a chorus of three men and three women, all sleekly dressed in patches of hot color by designer Giorgio di Sant'Angelo -- blocks of solids to emphasize the women's long legs and a bright codpiece for each of the men.

It's a semi-abstract, nonstory ballet, but Tippet's choreography makes it quite clear that this is about male-female relationships. Nora Kimball, the leggy female lead who is seen first skittering through the three-man corps, primps and smooths her hair in a beauty's self-absorption, while Robert Hill, entering with a wild toss of the head as he tears around the stage and through the three-woman corps, is the macho hell-raiser on the loose.

Their subsequent encounters, mirrored by the chorus, form the basis of the ballet. At times tender or tentative, at other times angry or forceful, the relationships are danced out in quick, sharp stabs of imaginative duets.

Tippet has created unique, amazing lifts for these couples; and he shows the hectic nature of the relationships in highly theatrical images. Kimball, for example, is flung through the male corps, and then makes a sudden, sensational leap from the wings into the arms of the men.

The tension and the surprise of the work are constant, right until the last, quick turn of events at the end.

The dancers react to this fresh, vigorous work by coming out of the repertory wallpaper and jumping to life as strong, virtuoso individual performers. Hill, in particular, is a revelation, in his bold, muscular attack.

"Enough Said," to be repeated Friday and Tuesday evenings, has its soft spots, to be sure, and not all of Jennifer Tipton's lighting design makes sense in its shift to dark shadows; but this is still and startling work that makes one eager to see what Tippet will be up to next. At this point, he looks like a choreographer with a lot more to say.

