

Mixed forms, styles form elegant hybrid

By **TRESCA WEINSTEIN**, Special to the Times Union

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ALBANY -- Like a brilliant mad scientist of dance, Victor Quijada has mixed forms and styles and emerged with a gorgeous hybrid of hip-hop, contemporary dance and ballet that transcends its parts to become something entirely new.

Quijada's laboratory is his Montreal-based company, Rubberbandance Group, which he codirects with dancer Anne Plamondon. Friday evening at The Egg, the troupe presented "Loan Sharking," a program of four works from the repertory Quijada has built since founding the company in 2002.

His work is informed by a diverse background that includes stints as a b-boy in Los Angeles, a modern dancer with Twyla Tharp and Rudy Perez and a ballet dancer with Eliot Feld and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal. The ensemble piece "Dr Ib Erif," which opened Friday's program, is one in a series of works Quijada has made that pair a break-dance aesthetic with classical music; this one was commissioned by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and is set to music from Igor Stravinsky's "The Firebird." The piece never pauses to catch its breath, rushing nonstop through flips and rolls, turns and lifts, as elegant and beautifully composed as classical ballet but with all the "wow" factor of hip hop.

Both cartwheels and balletic leaps show up in "Soft watching the first implosion," a trio for three male dancers, set to music by Antonio Vivaldi, that Quijada created in 2005 for Peter Boal & Company. Mariusz Ostrowski, Frederic Tavernini and Quijada flow over, under and around each other, moving almost as lightly as if they were on the moon.

"Attempt #2 at Reinventing the Hip Hop Routine," originally choreographed in 2001 for three b-boys, is reinterpreted here for the three classically trained female dancers (Plamondon, Louise Michel Jackson and Lila Mae Talbot) and set to music by Dave Brubeck. The women are almost always in contact, forming a connected chain of changing arrangements.

The second half of the program featured a shortened version of "Punto Ciego" (Blind Spot), which the company performed in its entirety at Jacob's Pillow this summer. The evening-length version incorporates various multimedia layers, including taped and live talk-show-style interviews, a discussion between Quijada and his onscreen image and a long section performed with modular sofas as moving props.

Without these elements, "Punto Ciego" comes across as a straightforward dance work that often possesses a meditative, dreamlike quality, emphasized by Jasper Gahunia's static-y, sampled score. The focus shifts from technology and communication to partnering in its purest form. Quijada and Plamondon are especially striking together; she seems to nearly float as she rises onto his shoulders, wraps around his torso and stretches nearly parallel to the floor--extending from his body like a strange, lovely new limb.

Tresca Weinstein is a frequent contributor to the Times Union.

Dance review

RUBBERBANDANCE GROUP IN "LOAN SHARKING"

When: 8 p.m. Friday

Where: The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany

Program: "Dr Ib Erif," "Soft watching the first implosion," "Attempt #2 at Reinventing the Hip Hop Routine," "Punto Ciego Abreviado"

Length: 90 minutes, one intermission

The crowd: More than 600, including a good-sized contingent of students from Union College, which co-presented the performance.