

The Washington Post

Dance review: David Dorfman meditates on love and loss in ‘Come, and Back Again’



Adam Campos - David Dorfman Dance: "Come, and Back Again."

By [Nora FitzGerald](#), Published: November 3

David Dorfman is so much more than the sum of the losses that define middle age. Yet in “Come, and Back Again,” he explores his personal trajectory to a state of no return: The stunning downtown dancer who catapulted to the front and center of the New York dance scene in the 1980s is now the heavysset faculty chair and elder statesman who can still get his groove on (boy, can he). But in this piece, Dorfman just as often slips away, off-scene, detached, into an interior life of salvaging memories, keeping the past alive and learning how to say goodbye.

The elegiac nature of the piece was a tad disturbing in that Dorfman, now in his late 50s, is as vital as ever. At the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland on Saturday, Dorfman was, as usual, throwing himself on the ground and tackling his younger male dancers, moving his own props off the stage and playing the accordion or the saxophone with a remarkable indie-style band playing live at the Ina and Jack Kay Theatre. The music was

sensational for alternative-rock fans, and the vocals wonderfully rich. Liz de Lise seemed to offer both Margo Timmins and a gentler Patti Smith in one voice, while Nick Montopoli channeled Tom Waits and Brad Roberts. The “look at my mess” set design could have been a conceptual installation by artist Ilya Kabakov — after it was taken to the scrap yard. The only thing missing was the performance soundtrack on CD.

Dorfman wrote that he began the project as “an exploration of poetic rock-and-roll,” citing Patti Smith as an influence; it evolved from there into a dance about love and loss, with sumptuous duets in which the dancers slipped around one another like curvy snakes. At one point dancer Whitney Tucker appears to stand on the hipbone of a prone Raja Kelly. Then she engaged in a wide-open *développé* (leg lift) to the side. It is one of hundreds of moments of physical and emotional trust.

In this close-to-epic one-hour meditation, Dorfman revealed his powerful talent for telling a story that is the audience’s story, too. They left the theater in the kind of mood that follows a heart-to-heart with an old, dear friend.