Dance remains the dominant ingredient in Bebe Miller's latest evening-length piece, Landing/Place, even though her groundbreaking use of technology creates a strong and evocative companion to the live movement.

Video projections by Maya Ciarrocchi, electronic music mixed on the spot by composer Albert Mathias and motion capture-based animation by Vita Berezina-Blackburn overlapped and melded into one seamless accompaniment to the five dancers, setting a tone here and sometimes a sense of place there but never overpowering the live action. Miller's experimental work premiered at the Drake Union's Thurber Theatre this weekend, the culmination of a lengthy journey for the choreographer, her collaborators and company, and a host of generous funders. Motion-capture technology, still in its experimental stages, has been much talked about leading up to the premiere. It surfaced in two ways in Landing/Place: as the basis for animation not suggestive of the human form, such as birds or clouds; and as slowly moving dots that still maintained the shape of a dancer's skeleton. In each instance the hypnotically beautiful images created a separate, new dimension to the piece -- rather like visual music.

Miller's choreography and Mathias' music are as close in rhythm
and style as two different art forms can be; when paired, they form one chugging engine to propel the work forward.

Miller's company -- Kathleen Fisher, Darrell Jones, Angie Hauser, Kathleen Hermesdorf and David Thomson -- have mastered Miller's rough-and-tumble movement vocabulary. They throw themselves into the choreography with the same weight, energy and going-for-broke power that are the hallmarks of Miller's own dancing. Their confident dancing lent the performance a sense of authenticity and uniformity, and reminded viewers of Miller's singular persona even though she wasn't onstage.

**Landing/Place** proceeds in many sections that flow smoothly from one to another. Projected images -- curtains blowing in the wind, birds swirling, miniature houses dancing along with the dancers -- recur, as do elements of the choreography and provide frames of reference. At the opening, a model house sits in a spotlight center stage. It is moved during the work but never leaves. It suggests the home we all were born into and left, the place that is central to our characters and our thoughts even when we are far away from it.

Miller ponders, mulls and dances around her theme but not in philosophical ways. **Landing/Place** is a multimedia symphony with waves of stunning, captivating images. But it asks no questions and offers no answers.

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