

**David Parker and The Bang Group  
Dance Theater Workshop, NYC  
May 8–12, 2007  
Reviewed by Eva Yaa Asantewaa**



Photographer: Steven Schreiber  
Courtesy: Courtesy Dance Theater Workshop

As *Hour Upon the Stage* opens, David Parker's eight dancers line up in the wings, sweep onto the stage together with hands lightly linked, then scatter to separate spotlights. At the concert's end, Jeffrey Kazin removes himself from the troupe, climbs the aisle stairs and exits the theater. Between those two fleeting moments lies an hour of unpredictable images and interpersonal relationships brought to pulsing life. For the first time, Parker does not perform with his team, and his absence might account for some of the work's underlying poignance.

This dance to the music of time contains, by its creator's accounting, "duration, rhythm, task, portrayal, decay, desynchronization, counter-time, obedience, folding, and tesseract (in the Madeleine l'Engle sense)," that is, a wrinkle in time.

Then it adds in "tango jumps" and "mad housewife" and movements sampled from Romantic ballet and vaudeville, shaped and interwoven with intricate care by the choreographer, performed with utmost conviction by Kazin, Cristina Aguirre, Kate Digby, Marta Miller, Nic Petry, Amber Sloan, Emily Tschiffely, and Zack Winokur. Parker might be an unusually brainy entertainer or an unusually entertaining brainiac. Either way, he and his handsome performers have wrought one of this season's most satisfying productions.

The work moves in a magically continuous flow as does Kathy Kaufmann's lighting—seamless, with a deft and gentle touch, along a continuum of revelation and mystery. Most of the movement devised by Parker, whose first love and earliest dance training was tap, shares space with sounds made by body percussion (hambone-like slaps against thighs or chest, feet pattering, fingers snapping or drumming against the floor) and a variety of nonverbal vocalization (gasps, coughs, sneezes, whistles, noisy kisses). This is theater of the body, by the body. Recorded music emerges only in the latter part of the piece, songs keyed to themes of rivers, evanescence, passing through and moving on.

*Hour Upon the Stage* can be enjoyed for its gush of novel, witty movement and dancer-generated sound or—perhaps befitting a piece originally inspired by Bruges' Astrid Park—for the pleasure of watching people and guessing at their private stories. There are probably whole histories embedded within Parker's tesseract. To find clues to this buried treasure, trust and follow your own emotions.