



## FINANCIAL TIMES

### Dance

## John Jasperse, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York – ‘Enchanting’

The choreographer’s new piece describes memory — and does it memorably



John Jasperse's 'Remains' at the Brooklyn Academy of Music © Grant Halverson

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016 by: **Apollinaire Scherr**

How can dance reflect on time when it is made of the stuff? John Jasperse’s latest commission from BAM does so by borrowing and mangling bits of old dances. The deep, enchanting *Remains* describes memory — with its lapses and distortions — via a highly idiosyncratic version of dance history.

Those bounding strides with arms swinging purposefully could be signature Paul Taylor if not for the wrists cocked like raised hooves. And the turns and triplets in pristine geometries à la minimalist Lucinda Childs have acquired a waltzy swish. The wry humour that percolates through *Remains* is self-mocking: Jasperse doesn’t reconstruct, he refashions. But the acclaimed New York choreographer’s slant is compelling. In *pietàs*

rewound and repeated as if on tape, Jesus throws back his head in ecstasy. The iconic Martha Graham torso-contraction is also more helplessly erotic than usual.

The dancer (most stirringly, Maggie Cloud) moves at these moments with dreamlike slowness. Just as often, the ensemble of six adopts the jerky stop-start of silent film (as well as its outsized theatricality). Jasperse likes to frame activity in bouts of stillness and silence. Time takes on different weights and distances in *Remains*, as memory does in life. One moment looms, stark and monumental; another seems as grainy as sleep.

The lighting, by Lenore Doxsee in collaboration with the 52-year-old Jasperse, proceeds analogously, introducing shadows, blur and a brightness like the present. John King's original score lends density and colour to the action. The long arc of a chord suggests abiding. A rich crush of voices brings to mind the funnelling of separate memories as they recede further into the past. Sometimes the lighting and music lead, other times they follow, but either way the interplay of elements casts a spell. Like the sequined get-ups by Baille Younkman that the dancers don at the hour's end, *Remains* refracts light all over the place and leaves us aglow.

★★★★★ To September 24, [bam.org \(http://www.bam.org\)](http://www.bam.org)

---

Print a single copy of this article for personal use. Contact us if you wish to print more to distribute to others. © The Financial Times Ltd.