

A respectable Continuum

By **UMA SHANKARI**

THE Singapore Dance Theatre's Arts Festival offering for this year, *Continuum*, proved to be a pleasure to watch. The triple bill – featuring Graham Lustig's *Evening*, *A Million Kisses to My Skin* by David Dawson and *Glow-Stop* by Jorma Elo – brought together three accessible pieces which were well-received by the audience.

The night kicked off with *Evening*, which played out like a lyrical poem.

Set to Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, the work began with a lone dancer exploring his world just as the sun begins to set. More dancers then appeared on the stage, which was bathed in gentle yellow light – also on a journey of discovery. At times, they displayed moments of pure joy and unguarded tenderness.

The sun then gets lower in the sky, shadows lengthen and new hues of the evening are depicted. On a red-hued stage, *Evening* then takes on a more sombre and melancholy tone.

The piece ends with a new sun rising the next day. Again, a sole dancer is left on stage to greet it, reflecting on what is past and what lies ahead. The work, as a whole, was an interesting affair.

By contrast, *A Million Kisses to My Skin* was more light-hearted. A celebration of dance and the dancer, *Kisses*, which is Dawson's newest work, had moments of breath-taking choreography.

Dancers leapt, twirled, glided, jumped for joy and reached out to each other and the heavens to the setting of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Piano Concerto No 1*.

It was a tricky piece, but one that was well-executed by the SDT, whose dancers gave every impression of having a ball of a time throughout.

The third piece was the even more difficult *Glow-Stop*. Premiered in October 2006 by the American Ballet Theatre, *Glow-Stop* is a dynamic work.

Twelve male and female dancers, attired in luminous crimson mini-dresses and unitards streak across the stage. The choreography played out almost like gymnastics, with the dancers often contorting their bodies into demanding poses. But while visually arresting, the ballet, set to music from Mozart and Philip Glass, ultimately did not have much to say.

With *Continuum*, SDT presented a respectable col-

lection of works. Special mention also has to be made of the lighting director for all three pieces who managed to create the right mood for each.

It was then perhaps a pity that the dancers performed to a half-empty Esplanade Theatre when this reviewer saw *Continuum* on Friday.

But one couldn't help but wonder if the dancers' talents would have been better served with a full

length piece that was a bit more original, which would have allowed the SDT – a dance company that is coming of age and celebrating its 20th anniversary this year – to stamp its mark all over it.

Graham Lustig's *Evening*: Set to Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, the work, as a whole, was an interesting affair

