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Buglisi Foreman Dance Society of the Performing Arts, Wortham Center' Cullen Theater, Houston, TX

Buglisi Foreman Dance holds a special place in the ecology of modern dance. All four of the founders, Jacquelyn Buglisi, Donlin Foreman, Terese Capucilli and Christine Dakin, were Martha Graham principals before striking out on their own. Their mission is two-fold: to honor a tradition and move it forward. This gem of a modern dance company manages to work with reverence toward tradition without imitation. Their roots are clear and visible without being a burden. Graham would be proud. Sand, Buglisi's homage to the desert, placed three couples

alongside Venezuelan artist Jacobo Borges's striking set and Phillip Glass's stunning score. Sand recalled her mentor the most of the four pieces on the program. Graham legend, Capucilli rendered a spellbinding performance as Sarah Bernhardt in another Buglisi work, *Against All Odds*. Capucilli captured Bernhardt's larger-than-life eccentricities with her grand gestures and regal carriage. Even her bows radiated a vintage melodrama and perhaps a bit of welcome nuttiness. Donlin Foreman's *Mean Ole' World* caught the company in an upbeat mood and showed off the company's versatility in this slinky romp set to Lisa DeSpain's smooth jazz score. Buglisi's *Requiem*, the centerpiece of the evening, proved a feast for the eyes and soul. Set to Faure's haunting music, the piece conjured equal parts peace and prayer. Five women wrapped in jeweled-toned golds and crimsons looked like they were emerging from a Caravaggio painting. The entire work has an Old Masters feel, rich and opulent, yet the tone was distinctly sorrowful. *Requiem* began with five mounds of colored silk that gradually took shape into elegant seated women. Clifton Taylor's lighting design bathed the ballet in a mystical smoky glow, which allowed the women to emerge out of a velvety black. Billowing fabric amplified Buglisi's sweeping, but weighted, gestures. Buglisi's poignant dance speaks to the luminous nature of sorrow by transcending sadness through a rarified beauty. The troupe delivered a polished performance throughout. Helen Hansen's generous and radiant performance stood out. —

Nancy Wozny