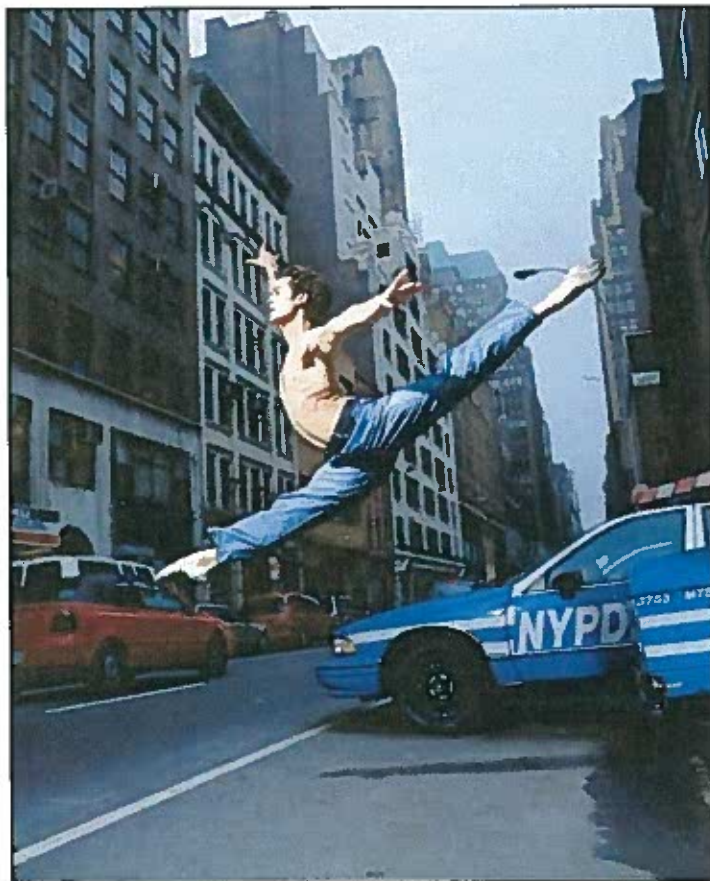


## 'Bad Boys' and multimedia girls dance at Wolf Trap

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By David Cannon, Sentinel Arts Critic

It's been a week for bad boys and multimedia girls, at least in the world of dance.

Wolf Trap is getting its summer season underway and an early highlight was Rasta Thomas' Bad Boys of Dance. Do not worry, completing its 12th season was the Jane Franklin Dance Company at Woolly Mammoth, and they gave women a chance to show off their talents.

Ladies first. Travel Tales was a retrospective of works from the past 12 years of the Jane Franklin Dance. The earliest piece on the program was from 1998 (Shorthanded) while the most recent was from this year. The group mixes modern dance with more performance arts techniques: using multimedia for several pieces and the bare stage for others.

The multimedia pieces worked best. "In the Blink of an Eye" had the dancers working with a video of a street scene, interacting with people on the tape. "Hiding Pink Panther" had dancers forming their shadows to mesh with the abstract designs on screen. But multimedia was not a requirement. "Shorthanded" used job rejection letters that dancers recited while in motion. This one even had artistic director Jane Franklin join in.

Not everything worked: "Hand Hold" was well done, but the piece really did not say anything. Meanwhile, "Crystal City Walk" was one of the best, using the full cast and multimedia for a day when a few individuals broke free from the crowd, standing above the muddle and even enjoying a passing rainstorm.

3 stars

One nice thing about an all female company is that it breaks the usual mold of young and very petite female

<http://www.thesentinel.com/pgs/entertainment/Review-Bad-Boys>

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*Photo courtesy of Wolf Trap. Rasta Thomas' Bad Boys of Dance at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts.*

It was well done and often very subtle. Meanwhile there was very little subtlety in Rasta Thomas' Bad Boys of Dance, recently at Wolf Trap. Thomas has accumulated a lot of accolades in a short time, including his work in the Billy Joel musical "Moving Out." There are lots of local angles to this story: Thomas and his wife Adrienne trained at a D.C. dance studio, the Bad Boys rehearse in Gambrills, and local dancer Robbie Nicholson is from Fredericksburg.

The Bad Boys are mostly showmanship. There were plenty of gymnastic moves, including somersaults and some amazing leaps and spins by Thomas and Nicholson. There was also a variety of dance moves, from the sultry opening tango set to Piazzolla, to a tap dancing duo that made for a surprise first act finish to Broadway-style ensemble pieces. They also could poke fun at themselves. Thomas and his wife could dance a serious number about a couple breaking up, and then the other male dancers

dancers. Here we had women of various age and builds proving they can dance, perform lifts and do gymnastic moves just as well as their counterparts.