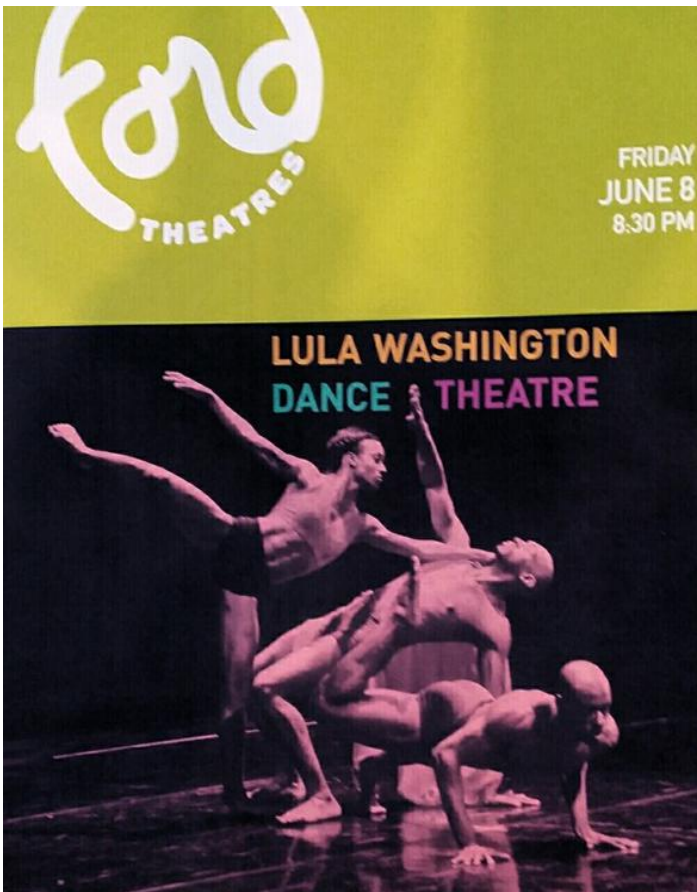




EUR Review/Lula Washington's Dancers Torch LA's Ford Theatre

[Marilyn Smith](#) June 11, 2018 at 8:03 am



*The Twitter tag for the **John Anson Ford Theatre** is, "Ignite @ the Ford." Ignite? How about on June 8, **Lula Washington** brought her dance company to the beautiful outdoor Hollywood, California venue and torched the place. With the help of works choreographed by David Rousseve (Enough), Rennie Harris (Reign) and Kyle Abraham (Hallowed), the intended message of unity and tolerance was delivered and received.

Lula and her husband Erwin opened the **Lula Washington Dance Theatre** nearly four decades ago and are now nationally known and mentioned in the same conversation as the likes of Alvin Ailey. Lula choreographs as well as teaches dance to inner-city Los Angeles residents.

She blends jazz, ballet and hip-hop with athleticism and performance art and is known for creating dance that explores social issues. The exploration of love, tolerance and unity in light of the unjust police killings of African-American males was the subject of the evening, which included beautiful costumes, many of which were designed by Lula Washington herself.

The opening performance was a routine titled, "There is Always Tomorrow." Although it was a piece nicely choreographed by Tamica Washington-Miller, daughter of Lula Washington and heir apparent to the dance throne and spoke of personal responsibility, it included an intro by Philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, which I have to admit I could barely understand through the thick accent. I hope that does not make me intolerant.

"Enough" was a powerful David Rousseve piece, performed by two dancers with increasing intensity in response to unnecessary police killings and asked the question if dancing is "enough" of a response to the situation. Kyle Abraham's "Hallowed" was performed to Aretha Franklin's, "A Change is Gonna Come." Lula Washington's Dance Theatre (LWDT) has an ensemble of very talented dancers on display. Rennie Harris' "Reign" which explores the path of a lost girl, who finds safety in church, displayed the dancing prowess of Krystal Hicks, who performed the opening solo.

The highlight of the evening was a segment titled "Open Your Eyes" which was a montage of Earth, Wind and Fire songs that included "Devotion", "Keep Your Head to the Sky" and a high-octane dance performance to "Serpentine Fire," which immediately took me back to my clubbing days. At one point Lula commanded the audience to dance and we obliged. In keeping with the tolerance movement and as part of the "Open Your Eyes" segment, there was a homosexual routine. The dancers were superb, although seeing two men in such close proximity may have pushed a few tolerance meters.

In addition to Krystal Hicks, other LWDT dancers included Joshua Alexander, Bernard Brown, Tehran Dixon, Jasmine Francisco, Christopher Frazier, Saidiya Imari and Michael Tomlin III along with associate and apprentice dancers Joniece Soraya Boykins, Thomas Davis, Danny Guerra and Kozue Kasahara.

I felt like part of the evening was spent at a New Year's Eve praise party and part of the evening was spent at a club and mixing the two worked for me. If you have an opportunity to experience a Lula Washington production, it would be money well spent; just ask anyone in the audience. A special thank you to Erwin Washington for the hook-up.



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