

DANCE REVIEW; East and West, Spinning Together and Apart

By Jack Anderson

Nov. 29, 2002

See the article in its original context from November 29, 2002, Section E, Page 30 [Buy Reprints](#)

[VIEW ON TIMSMACHINE](#)

TimesMachine is an exclusive benefit for home delivery and digital subscribers.

Spinnin' Ronin set cultures colliding when this New York-based troupe of Japanese dancers appeared at the Joyce SoHo on Sunday night.

In "Soul of Creature," Tsuyoshi Kaseda, the company's director, had people appear to greet the dawn of creation. But once they got moving, their thrusting gestures recalled those of martial arts and suggested that life was dangerous.

Yumi Kurosawa played Minoru Miki's delicate "Mebae" on a traditional Japanese harp. Then the dances to taped collages, designed and arranged by Tomokazu Yano, resumed with "Tsuki kage" ("Lost Love"), by Yukiko Miyawaki, the group's associate director. Flowing phrases, which occasionally recalled classical ballet, were occasionally punctuated by unexpectedly abrupt rhythmic shifts. Stylistic contrasts abounded. While Shinichi Harada, an actor, recited a text in Japanese in Mr. Kaseda's "Kabuku-towa" ("The Way of Ronin"), Mr. Kaseda performed fierce martial-arts movements. Yet when the men started battling, their belligerence turned comic.

A recording of "The Blue Danube Waltz" was heard during the intermission. Next came "Rokumeikan" ("When the Western Culture Meets the East"), choreographed by Mr. Kaseda, Ms. Miyawaki and Mayuna Shimizu, the group's manager. The cast at first portrayed gawky students learning Western ballroom dances. But everyone soon dueled to music from "Carmen."

Ms. Shimizu drifted gently through "I Want to Be the Wind Beneath Your Wings," a solo. Finally, there was "Rain," a somber dance about lives shattered by war, choreographed by Mr. Kaseda and Ms. Miyawaki.

Spinnin' Ronin demonstrated that it could spin from comedy to lyricism to serious drama. No wonder it aroused curiosity about where it would choreographically spin to next.