

# REVIEW: POETRY, PASSION AND POIGNANCY

Jennifer Shennan - Dom Post

*Parabelo / Onqoto* by Grupo Corpo

St.James Theatre, till February 26

Reviewed by Jennifer Shennan

This contemporary dance company from Brazil is a hugely energising way to lift the curtain on Wellington's 14th season of the International Arts Festival. Bravo.

Two works, *Parabelo* and *Onqoto*, choreographed by Rodrigo Pederneiras, use a contemporary dance vocabulary. The opening sequence, to chant-like music, is an awakening, with limbs sprouting up, searching connections and a place to grow.

Much of the movement is initiated in the pelvis, sent by agile hips up through the torso, from there tossed out via fluid arms and thrown-back necks. Breakneck speed builds through much repetition of highly gymnastic movement. You could get quite breathless just watching it.

With distinctive Latin American rhythms, and a number of songs from several regions of the country, an infectious quality grows from the beguiling smiles that appear here and there. There is a curious image of five large silhouette head shapes projected high (of the choreographer apparently). Later comes an intriguing set of family group portraits. The whole work builds in a kind of super charged group dynamic that, despite various costume changes, stays coherent. We soon have favorite movers we can't take our eyes off, amid a troupe of fabulous dancers.

After the interval, *Onqoto* reveals another dimension to this choreographer's thought, and it is profound. The dancers' arm movements and lighting in combination produce a remarkable effect of bird wings in flight. There are no hummingbirds here, but we treasure this illusion of flight. Dancers are there and suddenly, in a fleeting flash have disappeared. High speed dancing continues, life is for living.

You can't expect this Grupo Corpo to slow down, let alone stop moving. Wrong. There, totally unexpectedly, follows a counterpointed double duet of most astonishing poetry, power, passion and poignancy.



## Related Event

[Parabelo/Onqoto](#)