

A&E

Why we love seeing Grupo Corpo dance

★ LAST NIGHT

Grupo Corpo

☆☆☆

Choreography by Rodrigo Pederneiras. Until Saturday at the Premiere Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000.

SUSAN WALKER
DANCE WRITER

Toronto loves Grupo Corpo. No other dance troupe can be counted on to pack the Premiere Dance Theatre with a cheering crowd the way this Brazilian company of beautiful, tireless dancers does.

While the cast of the aptly named Grupo Corpo has cer-

tainly changed over its five appearances here, Rodrigo Pederneiras' choreography remains more of the same. That is to say, an impressive fusion of ballet, samba, modern dance and what-have-you, applied to impossibly quick tempos and demanding the kind of lifts, swings and general hurling about that makes one cringe to think of the injuries sustained, while marvelling at the dancers' skill and stamina.

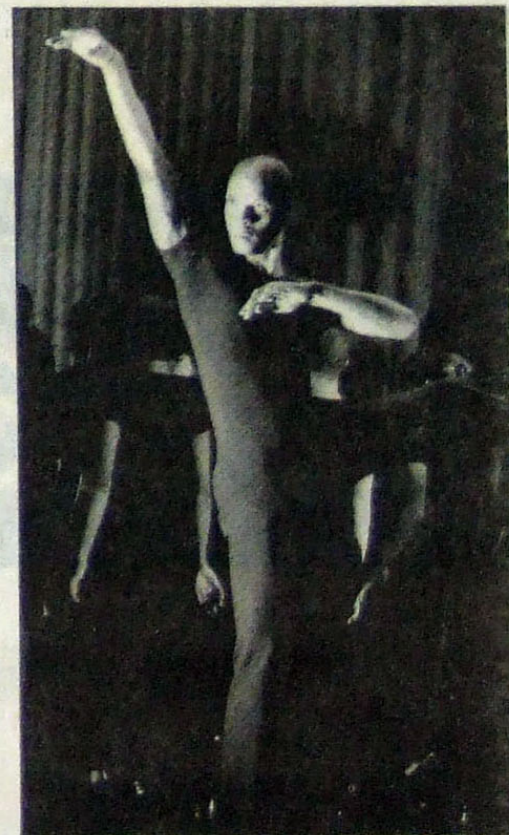
Onqotô is set to music by Caetano Veloso and José Miguel Wisnik, inspired by their discussion about the meaning of life. Nothing could be further from a philosophical exchange than the romping, stomping, rip-

roaring 42 minutes of 20 dancers cavorting in flesh-revealing unitards. Pounding the floor with their feet, throwing themselves down on their haunches, tossing each other in the air, they slip in and out of an ingeniously designed curtain wall that looks like a steel enclosure. Through some trick of lighting, we see a pattern created by arms streaking in rapid circles, giving visibility to the exuberance of the dance.

The striped socks worn in two sections of *Onqotô* suggest a reference to football, and Brazil's supremacy in that sport. As for the bit with the naked man slowly rising in a spot of light, it seemed unconnected to any-

thing before or after it, but was much appreciated.

Composer Ernesto Lecuona (1895 to 1963) was known as "the Cuban Gershwin" but he might have been surprised to see his name applied to a series of 12 carnally engaging duets danced to his romantic ballads. The couples give what is surely the most graphic illustration of dance as "a vertical expression of a horizontal desire." Pederneiras pokes fun at the stereotypical Latin dance duo, even as he takes them to extremes. His men in black seem to wear their scantily gowned, extremely long-legged women. Three blocks from the theatre, the applause still hadn't died.



Grupo Corpo dancers kick it out in *Onqotô*, a 42-minute dance.