

# DANCE

Preview



TWIN POWER Sarah Michelson and DD Dorvillier, right, capture the essence of Pollux and Castor.

## Second Wind

In her portrait of brotherly love and angst, DD Dorvillier rediscovers ballet

By Gia Kourlas

**W**ind (*the Eternal Return of the Same*) starts out as an earthy Greek myth—much raunchier than anything Isadora Duncan could have dreamed up—but ends with an elegant tutu ballet. With the help of her collaborator, actor Peter Jacobs, choreographer DD Dorvillier has created a magical multimedia look at love, androgyny and loss, in which Castor and Pollux, the mythological twins, battle mortality and wind.

In the opening of *Wind*, which will be at the Kitchen through Saturday 24, five dancers in blue lace bodysuits drape their legs and arms over one another while perched on a piece of suspended spandex. Seductively and gradually, they break apart, and the twin brothers—with Dorvillier as the doomed Castor and Sarah Michelson as Pollux—emerge from the pile of bodies fully formed. Although argumentative and violent, they're also connected by an emotional force.

Many versions of the myth of Castor and Pollux exist, but Dorvillier and Jacobs base their *Wind* loosely on a variation in which the brothers fight with two rival twins over cattle, and Castor is killed. "Pollux is left alone," Dorvillier says. "He asks Zeus, his father, to bring Castor back to life. Zeus can't, but strikes a

bargain with him: The brothers will live in Hades and Olympus, which means half time in the dark and half time in the light."

Zeus also deifies the twins, bestowing upon them special powers. "They're given the capability to create wind to either support or oppose journeys across the sea," Jacobs says. "There's a duality in wind—it can be refreshing on a hot day and bitter on a cold day."

The theme of duality and brothers even extends to the two real-life brothers, Guy and Tal Yarden, who provide, respectively, *Wind*'s score and visual design, which includes floor-to-ceiling columns of box fans (a few of them with microphones attached; Guy incorporates the whirling sound into his music). They are two of the most compelling artists at work in postmodern dance. While Guy is informed more by dance, and Tal by his background in theater, they share a drily humorous sensibility.

"It's really intense when they both show up at rehearsal," Dorvillier says. "They're so poker-faced, but I think they really provoke each other when they're together." Jacobs laughs in agreement. "We all look at each other and think, Can't we just put them onstage and go home?" he says. "They've already declined. We asked."

Dorvillier uses the notion and sound of wind more as a physical impulse for movement than as a literal element. Mercifully, her dancers don't pretend to be trees swaying in the breeze, but rather move as if pushed by an outside force. During her choreographic process, Dorvillier was struck by the image of a piece of blue tarp blowing in the wind in her Williamsburg backyard.

"We watched it blow and then closed our eyes and tried to move like it," she recalls. "It was dirty and old—yet it was like watching Nijinsky! It was a totally moving experience to watch this thing hang and blow in the wind. To experience something moving with a catalyst other than itself is important in the piece."

The decision for a postmodern choreographer to include ballet (with pointe shoes, no less) in a work is curious, but Dorvillier originally had aspirations to be a ballerina. "I've always had a real love/hate relationship with ballet," she says. "In college, I hated it. I remember they were talking about offering ballet technique class at Bennington College, and I just thought that was *heresy*. But I've always loved aspects of the ballet."

Ironically, in *Wind*, the only time all the performers touch—and actually dance together—occurs when the modern and ballet dancers share the stage. That observation has forced Dorvillier to reexamine her own dance history. "I have a little bit of a romantic connection to ballet—sometimes when I open my ballet books and look at pictures of Peter Martins or Baryshnikov, it flashes me back to being 14," Dorvillier says. "That was deep! I had such an intense physical desire for that perfect beauty." Discovering improvisation—the antithesis of ballet—at Bennington led Dorvillier to reject the form. But in creating *Wind*, she's discovered something about herself.

"What I've been trying to push away—the lyricism and grace of ballet—has always been in me," she says. "I think my best and worst fault is that I've always been sort of a sap. But it's a genuine desire to communicate physically on an emotional level. I think that's why ballet is interesting—it's emotional, like opera. It connects the lyric voice to the technical voice. Sometimes it's just a horrible failure, but other times it's simply beautiful."

***Wind (the Eternal Return of the Same)* will be at the Kitchen Thursday 22 through Saturday 24.**

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