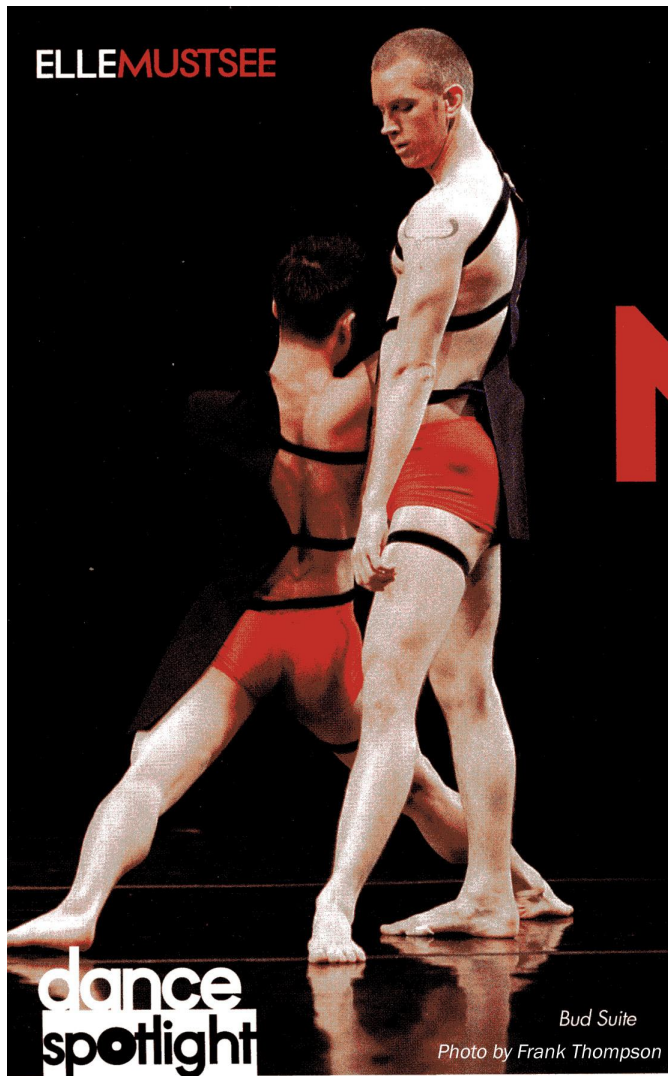


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dance
spotlight

Bud Suite

Photo by Frank Thompson

FLOWER POWER

Master of the dance Stephen Petronio and alterna-pop star Rufus Wainwright join forces of nature to create two stunning new works

Not one to rest on his considerable laurels, choreographer Stephen Petronio continues to distill his urban sensibility, combining his fiendishly kinetic movement with a virtual who's who of the creative vanguard—Lou Reed, Leigh Bowery, and Tanya Sarne of Ghost, among others. This month, at New York City's Joyce Theater (followed by multiple international stops), Rufus Wainwright provides the music and Tara Subkoff and British designer H. Petal the costumes for *Bud Suite*, a full-company version of last year's tough-tender men's duet.

The expanded *Bud Suite* represents a departure for Petronio, whose work over the past two decades reflects an artist in sync with his darker side. "I wanted to make something filled with light," he says, "to look at how things begin and how they transform." In one signature passage, four women, propelled by Wainwright's plangent "Vibrate," slink through a series of gorgeous tableaux, sometimes moving on their own, more often reaching out and coiling around one another. But these bits of delicacy don't mean Petronio's gone soft. *Bud Suite* accelerates as it grows, until the final movement, when the stage erupts in a rush of entrances and exits and electric partnering.

Equally compelling is the world premiere of *BLOOM*. Set to an original score by Wainwright and augmented by the Young People's Chorus of New York City, it's a dance as lyrical as it is explosive, made of elemental movements and gestures "picked up by dancers as they walked down the street." Sounds simple enough. Yet as transformed by Petronio, even the most rudimentary actions speak louder than words.—LISE FRIEDMAN