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Sound Check

An Explosion of Sound at Dance Theater Workshop

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Tony Waag Photo by Lois Greenfield



Brenda Bufalino performing in "Sound Check" on April 15.

Photo by Debi Field



Harold Cromer Photo by Debi Field

What do you get when you put Tony Waag, Brenda Bufalino and Harold Cromer on stage along with a chorus of tappers including Savion Glover's protégé Cartier Williams, The "New" American Tap Dance Orchestra, Barbara Duffy & Company, a Flamenco dancer, a Middle Eastern dancer and a live band? You get the 2nd annual "Sound Check" series, an explosion of sound that certainly doesn't need to be checked!

"Sound Check" is a true celebration of rhythm in its purest form, but even more than that, it's a celebration of the past, present and future of tap dance. If Cartier Williams is a sign of things to come, then Harold Cromer and the rest of the greats have done their job. This bright young dancer holds the future of tap in his hands.

For more information about the "Sound Check" series, visit <http://www.atdf.org/SoundCheckSeries.html>.

Produced by American Tap Dance Foundation founder Tony Waag and co-directed by Brenda Bufalino, "Sound Check" rocked Dance Theater Workshop in New York City on April 15. This unique fusion of percussive dance and classic musical theater features excerpts from "The Last Rehearsal Hall," a new musical written by Bufalino. The show celebrates Tap, Middle Eastern, and Flamenco dance and "how their practice joins together as they share the rooms of their beloved yet broken down rehearsal hall."

"Sound Check" was by far the most enjoyable tap dance experience I've ever had. The key to its success? Accessibility. When Waag debuted the series last year, he made it his goal to develop and present conceptual tap works held together by storylines and dramatic themes. Some other exciting elements that make "Sound Check" so accessible include singing, acting and interacting with a live band.

But "Sound Check" doesn't rely solely on theatrics—the real heart of the show lies in the sheer talent represented on stage. Not only are the dancers technically stellar, but they also possess the kind of showmanship that sums up the art of tap dance—cool, calm and collected with their upper bodies, yet so utterly ferocious with their feet. Their smiles are infectious—audience members grinned along as the dancers bounced rhythms off each other, played with the band, and came together for climatic sections of perfect unison.

It was an added treat to see some of today's best tappers sharing the stage with Brenda Bufalino, Tony Waag and Harold Cromer. Bufalino shows off her prowess shuffling about in her silver kicks, but it's not just her crisp taps that make her performance so engaging. As rehearsal hall manager, she carries the story along with effortless charm, sophistication, wit and humor. Tony Waag is equally as charming, working a top hat and cane with elegance and aplomb. And what can you say about Harold Cromer? He is a true gem, as always. A highlight of the show occurs when Cromer mentors 20-year-old Cartier Williams. After wowing the audience with feet as fast as lightning, Williams throws his arm around the tap legend as if he were his grandfather. The embrace of these two brilliant tappers who are separated by over 70 years was nothing short of historic.