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The body mirrors the soul

BY TANIA TREPANIER

Hither and thither spins the windborne, mirroring soul; A thousand glimpses wins, And never sees a whole.

— Matthew Arnold (19th century playwright)

It is said that the eyes are the mirrors of the soul. After seeing *Blood Relative*, choreographed and performed by Suzanne Miller

to the music of Allan Paivio, it is perhaps more appropriate to say that the body is the mirror of the soul. The large mirror that Miller dances on reflects a kaleidoscope of shapes that fascinates and enraptures the eye.

Miller uses the mirror beautifully to explore the idea of self as image. This dance piece has been a year in the making and is a thread of her previous work which explored lineage and identity. Miller wears a brightly coloured sweeping skirt, drawing us into the dance with technically superb

choreography. There are moments in the dance when Miller's puppet-like movements illustrate the tension between dance and music — one is not sure who or what is in control. Paivio's music is ethereal and pulsating, complementing Miller's dance style perfectly.

In the last section of the dance, the dancer sheds her skirt. Wearing a simple black body suit, she leaves the audience with stunning images of herself and her reflection, highlighting the beauty, strength, and sheer complex-

ity of the human body. Indeed this is the effect she wants. Miller has been influenced by the ideas of the 'ballet mechanic' (an approach to dance concerned with the ways the body and machinery work) that emerged in the first few decades of the 20th century.

Miller's piece is riveting and at times she displays a sensuality that is purely centred around the dancer's body. There is a sense that she is both enraptured and trapped by her reflection and the mechanics of her body.

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