



## Performance Review: CA Touring Project

By [Benn Widdey](#) in [Arts & Events](#) on November 22, 2008 1:30 PM

Re-arranging the cavernous [Diavolo](#) Dance Space to seat the audience on all four sides of the "stage," the California Touring Project opened our eyes to some inventive and entertaining new dances. Choreographed and performed by artists from both the north and the south of our golden Mecca, the evening was filled with samples of good dancing, creative minds and solid performances.

The four choreographers on this year's edition of the two-year-old traveling institution presented work that, in some ways, represents accomplished histories in the dance world.

The youngest dancemakers--[caseboltandsmith](#)--invited audience members to participate in their work, *Having Words*. Gently welcoming the seated viewers to extend an arm and hand to partner the choreographer/performers, the duet soon became a quartet, a sextet, and, by the end, there were over a dozen folks on the marley floor. As Liz Casebolt and Joel Smith instructed their newfound cavaliers to place a hand on their shoulder as they quietly introduced themselves to one another, the two smoothly moved their own bodies around, against, and in tandem with their no-longer terrified accomplices. Warmly, this created a small and supportive community right in front of our eyes. Sweet, risky and compositionally sound, the dance revealed a light humor in its simple poetics.

Though the title *PowerPlays* seemed better suited to the dance that preceded it in the evening's program, Susan Rose's structured improvisation for three women happily took me right out of the room and into a green field surrounded by large trees. Rimming the square performing space with small wind-up birds, these chirpers provided the sound accompaniment that transported the experiment to new places. What was similarly compelling was the integrity with which the performers--Kelli King, Sue Roginski and Hannah Schwadron--investigated movement, discovered interesting shapes, motion and arrangements and kept the energy alive though the piece. A satisfying achievement in any dance and an even more remarkable feat in improvisation.

*Fire Sale*, the quartet created by Cid Pearlman and her four dancers (Sarah Day, David King, Matthew Shyka and Sara Wilbourne) uncovered the complexity and emotional range of social relationships. Set to an original electronic and string instrument score by long time collaborator and Camper Van Beethoven violinist Jonathan Segel, the liquid dancers exposed the violence, tenderness, beauty, ugliness, strength and fragility that are part of close connections. Though an apt depiction of the subject matter, well crafted, strongly performed and highlighted by a chessboard-like flooring that kept the action restricted to within its edges, the wide range of component qualities and changing relationships watered down the possible strength of the work.

With a biography of international renown and a well-produced youtube clip that encouraged high hopes for a memorable viewing experience, Yolande Snaith re-designed old work, added new work-in-progress and attached this to a live standing violinist playing Bach excerpts (Pierre Joubert) in *Re-ordered Around*. The result was a series of solos, duets and trios that were beautifully performed (by Devon P. Brawley, Rebecca Bruno, Greg Lane, and an unnamed replacement for an ailing dancer), cleanly and elegantly staged and costumed, yet



disappointingly shallow in its overall reach. With a program caveat that explained that *Re-ordered Around* is a departure from Snaith's usual multi-layered, visual and theatrical background of work, the potency of this piece was the luscious movers and the delicious (though often familiar) movement. Obviously, the choreographer knows how to move a body around, challenge the dancer's technical virtuosity and swallow the available space, but that wasn't enough to keep me pulled into the experience. I look forward to seeing some of her "usual" work.

Overall, this California Touring Project is a great idea that has already proved creatively successful. What it needs now is financial sponsorship and economic support. That these artists are footing the bill for the whole nine yards is an embarrassment to our cultural landscape and a testament to the fortitude and determination of the artists involved. There are two more shows left here in LA, so go and enjoy some live performance!

**California Touring Project**

**Featuring: casebolt and smith, Cid Pearlman, Susan Rose and Yolande Snaith**

Saturday, November 22 at 8:00 PM & Sunday, November 23 at 6:00 PM

Diavolo Dance Space

616 Moulton Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90031

Tickets: \$20 General and \$16 Students, Seniors and Professional Dance Artists

[Online](#) or at the door (cash/check only)

*photo of work by Cid Pearlman by Steve DiBartolomeo*