

**Starr Foster shares a compatible style with Jane Franklin**BY JULINDA LEWIS  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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Richmond's own Starr Foster and Arlington-based Jane Franklin teamed up for a perfectly balanced joint performance of dance at the Grace Street Theater. Each choreographer presented three works, including two premieres by Foster.

**DANCE REVIEW****STARR FOSTER, JANE  
FRANKLIN****AT:**Grace Street Theater  
Saturday

So in tune were the two artists that the costumes for Foster's new "Seven Sisters" and Franklin's "Games" were strikingly similar ensembles of slips and camisoles.

Besides appearances, these two choreographers also share a compatible style and range of movement. It might have been interesting to see what would have happened if they had combined their separate companies for one joint endeavor on this program. Conjecture aside, the program had some bright moments as well as some lulls, due at least in part to the shared movement vocabularies and philosophies.

"Seven Sisters" is a dance for six women. The seventh, presumably, exists only in memory and is the impetus for lovely, intimate vignettes of hand holding, clinging and climbing. The artfully shadowed stage, the Schubert piano trio and somewhat dark drama are reminiscent of Martha Graham. Perhaps the late Ms. Graham is the missing seventh sister.

Foster takes a different tack with her second premiere, "On a Wire." Accompaniment by Brian Eno and Jah Wobble drive this edgy dance for six women who fill the stage with an energetic burst of athleticism.

Somewhat less familiar to Richmond's dance scene are the works of Jane Franklin. Her "Games" show a fine-tuned sense of humor as three women dance playfully with simple props - a purse, a lipstick and a bra. The piece also includes two men dueling with a bowling ball, an intriguing section involving covered baskets - at one moment they are too heavy to lift and the next they are lightly dangled from a foot - and the silly, simple pleasure of keeping a feather afloat with your breath.

Franklin uses an intriguing and visually challenging layered video as backdrop to "In the Blink of an Eye." Dancers, including a toddler and toddler wranglers, appear silhouetted on the screen as well as live on stage in this piece that is about serenity, sudden danger and rescue. This multilevel work is open to alternative interpretations. Depending on one's perception, it could also relate to life cycles, alternate planes of existence or motion dynamics.

The program also included Franklin's tai chi-like "Blue Moon" and Foster's "Snake in the Grass," a work improbably set to 1950s striptease music. "Snake in the Grass" starts out with a bounce before erupting in a series of gestures that seem intended to amuse rather than communicate.

Without a theme, the choreographers let their works stand for themselves. And it was not a bad decision. Overall, Saturday evening's program was met with enthusiasm by a nearly full audience.

Personally, I would have preferred a little less compatibility and a few more eruptions.