

## Independent Weekly



Arts » Dance

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## ADF: After minimalist opening, look for maximalist second week

by Byron Woods



Dendy Dancetheater performs at Duke June 21–23.

Photo by Sara D. Davis

**A**fter the theatrical minimalism of opening week, with Monica Bill Barnes' comedy of performers' manners and Kate Weare's chamber psychodrama closing tonight in Reynolds Theater, **American Dance Festival** audiences will likely find their aesthetics recalibrated this week with a vengeance.

While this may be the festival premiere for **INBAL PINTO & AVSHALOM POLLAK DANCE COMPANY**, Pinto and Pollack are no strangers to ADF audiences. Both of their collaborations with Pilobolus—the comic and poignant folk tale *Rushes* and the surreal (and somewhat less successful) *2B*—debuted here in 2007 and 2009, respectively. The decade before, Pinto's *Frieda and Rosa*, an atmospheric plunge into an alternate world of absurd Victoriana, was a 1998 season standout in the now-lapsed International Choreographers Commissioning Program. The following year, the pair debuted the work we'll see this week beginning Thursday, June 17.

It's been erroneously reported that *Oyster* is an adaptation of a short story by film director Tim Burton. Those familiar with "The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy," a thin book of eccentrically illustrated tales that first gave the world Stain Boy, the Staring Girl and the Boy with Nails in his Eyes, will search the DPAC stage in vain for the boy with the telltale mollusk head.

Still, by the end, those fans of Burton's most outré characters might feel more or less at home. So would devotees of David Lynch, for that matter. With a dapper, two-headed ringmaster in charge (in a conical, black and white costume on long-term loan, apparently, from the Cabaret Voltaire), an unclean and not particularly well-lit circus unfolds. In its various acts, oddly garbed, possibly malnourished and physically dysfunctional self-styled dancers and gymnasts perform feats—or, sometimes, fits—of balance, terpsichore and legerdemain. A score ranging from scratchy old recordings of Puccini to Yma Sumac is underscored by the sound of a low, desolate wind. Among its aerial and floor-based spins, expect a barbed question or two ultimately directed at the audience: In a freak show of this sort, who constitutes the biggest freaks of all?

By now, **MARK DENDY** certainly qualifies as another familiar ADF face, with

