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## DANCE REVIEW

# Goode's troupe again shines beacons of hope

Performers assume roles and tell home truths in the local premiere of 'Mythic, Montana,' recalling 'Our Town.'

By **JENNIFER FISHER**  
*Special to The Times*

In the land of Joe Goode, the gentle giant of dance-theater from San Francisco, there are always small squares of light, in which interesting characters speak or sing little home truths. Things like, "love is doomed" and "it's just so hard to keep performing a version of yourself."

The perfectly tuned actor-dancers of Joe Goode Performance Group elaborate with wickedly apt gestures and drift dancing, a spirited, controlled singing that pauses to highlight beautiful poses and then rolls on like smooth conversation. With wry self-assessments, ever so charmingly askew, they make you laugh and wince and pine for a life in which pining would always be so poetic.

Continuing this tradition in grand style, "Mythic, Montana" had its Southern California premiere Saturday night at the carpenter Performing Arts Center in Long Beach. A kind of up-dated "Our Town," complete with miniature houses and portable rock-like set pieces (by Richard Olmsted), it has a

narrator, Goode himself, a loony -sage in plaid flannel shirt and hunting hat with ear flaps sticking out; a few characters that suggest Greek myths; and a chorus of student dancers from Cal State Long Beach woven seamlessly into the mix.

One of the real pleasures of this piece, and of the older "What the Body Knows," which began the evening (with the priceless Elizabeth Burritt), is the way each dancer inhabits a role.

In "Mythic, Montana" there's Psyche (Marit Brook-Kothlow), dressed like a ratty Juliet, sounding like a Valley girl, who says she wants to escape small-town hell and "the smell of the Kentucky Fried," only to fall into some hormonal duets with local losers. In another square of light, Marc Morozumi is a Narcissus-like buff dude whose ridiculously laconic speech and dazed pretty face bring out the surface-level longings of everyone else.

Between scenes, Goode impishly dispenses too-pat pessimism, sometimes being snowed on (paper bits) and splattered with rain (real water).

Toward the end, his company creates a rhapsody of pure dance to evocative violins that sound like Gustav Mahler. Limbs rise in unison on the high notes and dancers are held aloft a moment, like hope. In the land of Joe Goode, there's always hope, often symbolized by the beautifully evolving shapes of dance itself.