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'The Riddle' of life resists easy answer

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July 27, 2003 | By Lucia Mauro, Special to the Tribune.

Independent dancer-choreographers Suzanne Dado and Adriana Durant have joined forces to reinterpret in movement the mythical Sphinx's esoteric question to Oedipus: "What walks on four feet in the morning, on two at noonday and three in the evening?"

The answer is tied to the life cycle and refers to a [baby](#) crawling on all fours, an adult standing upright on two legs, then the need for a cane in old age. In "The Riddle"--a two-part modern-dance concert that opened Friday night at Links Hall--the artists reflect on the inevitable passage of time and the struggle to connect with others.

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Of the choreographers, Dado achieves more layered movement and greater emotional truth in her new work, "Morning, Noon and Night," which reveals the stages of life in three taut sections. Mesmerizing soloist Sarah Haas embodies the curiosity of a [child](#) eager to discover the random mechanics of movement. She does not sacrifice meticulous form within the improvisational nature of her wistful toe-wiggling.

Haas' detached duet with the boldly focused Dado in the second section emphasizes an uncomfortable toggling between commitment and independence.

Dado's solo finale is set against a video projection of a watch moving in and out of [focus](#). Within a series of inward coiling and muscular, low-to-the floor contortions, she appears to be pursued by the unforgiving timepiece until she melts into her imminent demise. Yet the suggestion of a fetal position offers both resolution and regeneration.

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The first act centers on four relationship-based pieces by Durant. Her latest solo, "Before Fire Works," sets into motion the deliberately tenuous quality of her three subsequent dances. But, unlike the fierce integrity with which Dado tackles abstract ideas, Durant does not transform awkwardness or self-doubt into an artful vision to be contemplated. Instead the choreography feels clunky and offers no visibly climactic arc.

Durant's "The Decision," executed by three female dancers, does not stretch beyond a gimmicky zipping and unzipping of [clothing](#) parts (like a sleeve) to illustrate angry titillation.

"The Riddle" runs Sunday, Aug. 1-3 at Links Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave. Tickets: \$10-\$12.
[Phone](#): 773-281-0824.

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