

Sands' 'Space' is gripping display

By Nigel Hatton
Star Tribune Staff Writer

At the midpoint of his first evening-length program in the Twin Cities on Thursday night, a majestic and powerful Uri Sands crouched and methodically crawled to a spotlighted corner of the stage. Then he exploded into a mix of sweeping arms and legs, undulations made all the more provocative by their syncopation with the lyrics of Radiohead's "Like Spinning Plates."

Sands is an alumnus of Alvin Ailey and the Minnesota Dance Theater and principal dancer and choreographer with the North Carolina Dance Company. For this program, he and his co-artistic director and wife, Toni Pierce-Sands, assembled a first-rate cast of local and national dancers for a dance that draws from classical ballet, jazz, hip-hop, Spanish, Indian, African and other forms as it weaves colorful tales of love, loss and reconciliation. Music spanned the globe as well. Compositions ranged from Bach, Eric Satie and Phillip Carout to the haunting words of Nina Simone and the spiritual and melodic voices of Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

The show opened with Stephane Andre, wrapped in red, emerging onto a dark stage with precise and sure movements. In an act of bodily and artistic call-and-response, he invited the entrance of 13 dancers whose furious moves were mesmerizing.

Well-trained dancers, displaying precise turns and sure lifts, were the highlight of a se-



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Choreographer Uri Sands, left, dances with Danial Shapiro in "Space-T.U.-Embrace." The production draws from classical ballet, jazz, hip-hop, Spanish, Indian, African and other forms.

Music review

Space-T.U.-Embrace

Who: Choreography by Uri Sands.

When: 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. today.

Where: Barbara Barker Center for Dance, 500 21st Av. S., Minneapolis.

Tickets: Sold out. 651-293-1549.

ries of duets in the three-part program. Aparna Ramaswamy and Pierce-Sands complemented each other well in "Chaaya (Shadow)" as did the kingly white-robed MaryAnn Bradley and Peggy Seipp as they moved to the music of Madreus in "It Could Be Fear."

What appeared after intermission transported the audience to the chaotic yet hopeful land of South Africa. Accompanied by the harmonies of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, colorfully garbed dancers spun, pirouetted, shimmied, embraced and glided among props of hanging metallic sheets to create a powerful performance that left everyone in the building wanting more.

Sands is at a loss to pinpoint his interests as a choreographer, saying that some days he yearns for classical interpretations of Bach, while other days he's in a mood for moving to hip-hop. His and Pierce-Sands' work is refreshing, reminding me of a great critic's insistence that true innovation is a result of understanding traditions.

Nigel Hatton is at nhatton@startribune.com.