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## DANCE REVIEW

### At its heart, a dark tale old and familiar

By Victoria Looseleaf, *Special to The Times*

First there is the face: Astonishing in its many guises, this is a visage simultaneously old and young, ecstatic and empty; one where a surprised look becomes a world of wisdom living within a sly, sweet smile. This is the face of Oguri, butoh master and L.A. jewel. That his body is also a pristine, pliant work of art makes an Oguri performance a profound journey unlike any other.

And so it was Saturday at Venice's Electric Lodge, when the dancer presented "Caddy! Caddy! Caddy!" Inspired by William Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury," the 55-minute work was its own poetry, gushing with physical, emotional and spiritual depths.

Accompanied by Paul Chavez's deliriously original score (performed live), Oguri pierced the heart of Southern family darkness, and with it, our own. His latest dance troupe — Honeysuckle (Jamie Burris, Morleigh Steinberg and Roxanne Steinberg) — completed the remarkable, fractured picture.

Sprawled on a child's chair on a small wooden platform (think cozy front porch), Oguri, in white face and carrot top-like wig, wore baggy pants and a shirt. Unblinking, he moved only his head, so slowly as to be virtually imperceptible in the dim, amber light. A faint train whistle sounded; the head now cocked.

A million stories played out in these moments of near stillness before Burris, clad in a floral print dress, stealthily entered the narrow pool of water separated from the stage/porch by barbed wire. Clutching a calla lily, she began spinning.

Oguri responded with a silent, anguished scream, eventually contorting himself into and around the chair in what would become a prolonged, startling exit.

Roxanne Steinberg appeared in black pumps and dress, an enigmatic tableau moving her long, bony legs unnaturally. She was a 21st century hair-tossing Veruschka to Morleigh Steinberg's athletic mime, the latter arriving in a man's suit, straw boater and cowboy boots. Scattered piano sounds accompanied this squatting, bouncing, backward-walking dance, before Morleigh, wading into the water, stripped down to a slip, then straddled and snipped the wire.

Liberated, the women (three Graces, albeit ones swatting imaginary flies) frolicked in hide-and-seek mode, the music swelling to herald Oguri's reentry. Naked and wigless, he semi-reclined in the pool, smoothly slithering into Morleigh's shed suit.

Finally, upright and facing the audience, Oguri — hat in one hand, book in the other — was the mysterious stranger, a gentleman caller, that much-needed emissary beckoning from beyond.