

Come In

Demi Soloist Syvert Lorenz Garcia shares his experience on revisiting Aszure Barton's *Come In*

By Kharma Grimes

A LITTLE TENDERNESS

In *Come In*, the dancers explore intricate, delicate movements that contrast with the traditional expectations of male dancers. Garcia describes a moment where the ensemble touches their faces in a “tender, almost weighty” gesture, showcasing the softer side of masculinity.

CHAIR SECTION

A unique element in *Come In* is the introduction of chairs, where the dancers perform a thematic step. Garcia notes that this section pulls moments from real life, bringing an organic quality to the performance that blurs the line between the staged and the lived experience.

MEDITATIVE MASCULINITY

Garcia emphasizes the calm, almost zen-like feeling in the ensemble movements, where the focus shifts from bravado to a more introspective expression. This serene energy allows the dancers to reveal a side of masculinity that is rarely seen on stage—one that is introspective, connected, and deeply human.

BIRDS-EYE PERSPECTIVE

Barton encourages the dancers to be aware of the entire stage, not just their individual roles. This holistic approach, described by Garcia, fosters a “communal sense among the dancers,” allowing them to stay present within each step and contributing to the overall fluidity and cohesion of the piece.



ASZURE BARTON'S COME IN is a poetic contemporary ballet that challenges the typical portrayal of masculinity on stage. This introspective piece, set to Vladimir Martynov's meditative all-string score, features thirteen male dancers and explores themes of vulnerability, strength, and unity. Originally premiered by Houston Ballet in 2019 and later performed at New York City Center for the company's 50th anniversary, *Come In* now returns to the Wortham stage.

Demi Soloist Syvert Lorenz Garcia, who performed in the Houston Ballet premiere in 2019, reflects on his experience revisiting the work. “Being

slightly older helps,” Garcia shares. “The steps are still in my body, so this time, I get to focus on achieving the feeling of the movement instead of just copying.”

Working with Barton has profoundly impacted Garcia's approach to dance. “She has a way of making you feel like you are enough,” he says. Barton's process allows the dancers to focus on the essence of movement rather than striving for technical perfection. This approach creates an environment where the dancers can explore their individual identities onstage.

Come In is unique in its portrayal of male dancers. Garcia describes

the piece as offering a “zen-like” atmosphere where the dancers can express a softer, more tender side of masculinity. “It's always trying to show a different aspect of men,” he explains. “This ballet softens everything and lets us show a side of ourselves that we don't often get to explore in traditional ballet.”

As Garcia and his fellow dancers prepare to perform *Come In*, they look forward to bringing their personal experiences and refined understanding of the work to the stage, offering audiences a powerful exploration of what it means to simply be. ●

Come In



Principal Connor Walsh. Photo by Amiava Sakkar.

WHAT YOU'RE WATCHING

Originally choreographed for ballet legend Mikhail Baryshnikov, this contemporary work for thirteen male dancers offers a raw and immersive experience through its honest, nerve-tingling ensemble movements and breathtaking solos. Set to the meditative all-string score of Vladimir Martynov, *Come In* explores the depths of human connection and expression. The choreography delves into themes of vulnerability and resilience, creating an intimate dialogue between the dancers and the music.

WHAT YOU'RE LISTENING TO

Come In!, a 1988 work for strings, celesta, and woodblock by Russian composer Vladimir Martynov, might sound at first like the slow movement of a Romantic-era string quartet, but the contemplative mood is soon interrupted by a “knock” at the door. According to Martynov, “all our deeds are but a timid knocking on this mysterious door”— that is, the door to heaven. Woven into six continuous movements, the celesta and woodblock “knocking” continues as two solo violins soar above a string ensemble chorale. We seem to get our response at the very end, but what is beyond the door is left unanswered.

Is anything as sublime as a stage full of ballet dancers barely moving, simply and purely, in unison? I think not. Aszure Barton's Come In opens ... on a meditative note that feels like a palate cleanse from the world's noise. It's a rumination on the passage of time, the kind of dance that brings you back to life's most essential truth: We are young, then we are old."

MOLLY GLENTZER, HOUSTON CHRONICLE (2019)