



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## Vital Resonance: Sergiu Matis's Earth Works

ImpulsTanz Vienna, 13.07.2025 [ENA]

Last night at Odeon, Sergiu Matis unveiled *Earth Works*, an Austrian premiere in frames of the ImpulsTanz Festival 2025 marking himself as one of the most urgent voices in contemporary dance. Grounded in ecological concern, the piece channels the current climate crisis through its poetic dramaturgy and kinetic vocabulary—a potent blend of the intellectual and visceral.

Matis frames five dancers—Lisa Densem, Moo Kim, Sergiu Matis himself, Nicola Micallef, and Manon Parent—in a landscape defined by both memory and anticipation. Surrounding them, a curated selection of texts—from authors like Jeanine Leane and Harun Morrison—links “places in their vicinity”—beloved yet endangered—with a precise emotional cadence. The dancers’ movements extract tension from these words, embodying geological shifts, delicate ecosystems, and sudden collapse.

Antye Greie-Ripatti’s soundscape pulses with urgency: subterranean drones, electronic microstorms, and sudden silences shape an audio world that amplifies every gesture. The synergy is remarkable—sonic textures inform movement qualities, while dance reconfigures sound into tangible motion.

Visually, Ladislav Zajac’s lighting evokes elemental forces: raw, amber glows resembling dusks or droughts, and sharp frigid tones conjuring ice shards or loss. Costumes—designed collaboratively—merge spontaneous improvisation with ritual, as tactile fabrics morph with each shift.

Choreographically, Matis refuses linearity. Movements accumulate in waves, clusters, and dispersing solos—mimicking the spatial logic of nature. Solo interruptions bloom into quintet interactions, giving way to silent inertia. This spatial layering resonates with ecological multiplicity: interdependency, disruption, renewal.

At its emotional core, *Earth Works* balances elegy and hope. There's sorrow for vanished ecosystems—visible in still duets and tremulous spins—but also a memory-charged tenderness. Especially in duets, hands brush wounds, backs offer support, and the final tableau morphs into a carefully held circle, suggesting community and resilience.

Matis's dramaturgy translates global environmental urgency into immediate, embodied exchange. The invocation of specific landscapes makes the ecological intimate—it is not abstract, but personal, poetic,

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political. Against thunderous electronic pulses, dancers enact both mourning and insistence—"Look! Care!"

With impressive dramaturgy by Mila Pavicevic and resonant technical support—from sound (Andrea Parolin, Ivan Bartsch) to lighting—every detail supports the work's coherence. The texts appear in surtitles, but the experience is sensorial first: the words linger in the body, not just the mind.

In 80 minutes, Earth Works offers an elegiac call: to witness. To feel. To act. Sergiu Matis has crafted a choreographic ecology, responsive to crisis yet pushing toward preservation. It is a contemporary manifesto in movement: urgent, expansive, and astonishingly beautiful.

As a modern ballet expert, I find Earth Works an exemplary fusion of form, content, and context. It breaks open dance as a mode of ecological activism—imaginative, insistent, and deeply humane.

In short: Earth Works is essential dance theatre—a powerful, hope-infused call to recognize and protect our shared world.

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