



My Side-View of the Dance Magazine Awards

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By Wendy Perron

I always have the best seat in the house at the Dance Magazine Awards because I get to watch from backstage.

On Monday night I got to see Hee Seo's extra swooning surrender when she fell back into Cory Stearns arms in Tudor's *The Leaves Are Fading*.

I heard, but didn't see, Julie Kent almost lose it when she talked about her coach, Georgina Parkinson, who died in 2009. I saw the strength and prayerfulness of Renee Robinson dancing an excerpt of Ron K. Brown's stirring *Grace*. After I ran back to the dressing room to get Renee safety pins to hold up her skimpy, glittery skirt, I saw her deliver a dynamic, historically accurate, word-perfect speech *with no notes*.

I saw Anna Kisselgoff, barely tall enough to reach the mic, keep the audience in stitches, being surprised herself at how funny she was. ("It wasn't funny on paper," she

kept saying afterward.) In the tappers' tribute to Dianne Walker, I saw Jason Samuels Smith sauntering onto the tap floor in his gleaming white shoes, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards' feminine intricacies, and Michelle Dorrance daring speed and fun.

And when Dianne Walker invited the audience to join, I saw April Cook, Tony Waag, and will-he-or-won't-he Savion Glover join the others onstage. After hugging each of her mentees, Dianne led them all in a Shim Sham into the BS Chorus. She was radiant.

I gotta admit, it reminds me of my own performing days—when you're backstage and you're waiting to go on, or you've just been on, and you're bursting with admiration and affection for your brave colleagues out there.



Hee Seo and Cory Stearns of ABT in *The Leaves Are Fading*

Ailey's Renee Robinson in *Grace*

Julie Kent in her acceptance speech

At the reception: Anna Kisselgoff, me, Julie Kent, Renee Robinson, and Dianne Walker

Anna Kisselgoff in her acceptance remarks

ALL PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN