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Sophistication in the minimal

DANCE: *Twilight's Glove*, Carmen Olssons new dance work, is full-bodied happiness.

Buto dance on the rocky West coast of Sweden – doesn't that sound slightly exotic? I have always associated classic Japanese buto with whitened faces in grotesque expressions, expanded into strictly formatted body art. The Swedish choreographer Carmen Olsson rejects the grotesque, using

Buto techniques to delve deep inside and finding expressive power. The result is an organic but tight-reined body art of great beauty, a spiritual experience of the supreme fragility and strength of the human body.

Carmen Olsson is a solo dancer, having created about thirty choreographies for various stages and situations since her debut in 1997. Her concentration and seriousness have always been almost touchable, but her dance has never been so totally and transparently at ease as in her new piece, *Twilight's Glove*. After its première at the Pustervik Theatre in Gothenburg at the end of April, she is now performing it at the Swedish Dance Biennial.

Like a diminutive clown, or perhaps some Dickensian character of total clarity of vision, her delicate body seems to rise out of the stage floor, and then proceeds to conquer space and motion. Demanding repetitions are refined into captivating choreography. This is fine-grained and unhurried – a small jump becomes quite sensational. This sophistication in the minimal is achieved through extremely hard training, totally conscious of energy, balance and harmony – both physical and mental. Each glance, each orientation, the precise angle of a hand; everything is significant.

The set design is serenely meditative. Against a backdrop of segments of thin paper, warm lighting plays saturated variations across the naked floor. Her costume of natural linen is austere tailored, enhanced only with a delicate frill. Piano tones fall like serene rain, intensifying to thunder as the vibrations of her motion expand.

Carmen Olsson's dance is a state of happiness, totally manifested in a human body. She implants this feeling directly into her audience; when I leave the theatre I am no longer breathing in the same way as when I entered. *Twilight's Glove* will soothe you in these stressful times. Hurry to Atalante!

The Swedish Dance Biennial 2006

"*Twilight's Glove*"

Choreography and solo dance: Carmen Olsson

Set design and costume: H N Koda

Music: Jens Friis-Hansen, Peter Tegnér

Lighting: Björn Nilsson

Performing tonight at the Atalante Theatre in Gothenburg

Lis Hellström Sveningson

Translation: Alan Waller
