

ADF show earns cheers, applause

By SUSAN BROILI : The Herald-Sun

DURHAM -- **Intense emotion, powerful drama and simply beautiful dancing** filled this week's American Dance Festival program featuring dances by Donald McKayle, **Doug Varone** and Ronald K. Brown -- and drew **enthusiastic cheers and applause**.

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Doug Varone's 1988 "**Home**" **maintains, like a taut line, the emotional intensity of heartache that causes a catch in the throat**. In it, he and Peggy Baker portray a couple who exhibit brief displays of love (they kiss, he holds her) but mostly seem estranged. Either they don't have the capacity to express their love for each other or they've lost the chance and can never rekindle it. Either way, their restless gestures (they can't sit still in chairs close to each other for long), and a sense of restraint have a powerful impact.

Varone's 2006 "**Lux**" to "The Light" by composer Philip Glass could be a ballet for an opera. **Masterfully performed** by Varone's company, Doug Varone and Dancers, this is dance on a grand scale in every sense -- the **vibrant, virtually nonstop, energetic, expansive movement**, the coming and going of various configurations of dancers as it builds, then pares down and builds again in an ebb and flow that washes over the stage. All of this conjures an atmosphere of sprites or fairies that begin dancing at dusk and continue as darkness deepens. The only set is a glowing orb that appears to magically rise.