

# thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Andrea Clearfield

## #shamanicinterfaces: Creative Meditation

by Kalila Kingsford Smith

*Interface One:* We enter the Community Education Center as though entering a sacred space. The program notes instruct us to stand next to a dancer and receive a personal offering of movement. I pause in front of one performer, feeling slightly uncomfortable being this close, as though I have invaded her space. Rotating slowly around her center, she pops her chest forward, allowing the impulse to follow sequentially through her arms. As her eyes disconnect from mine, I retreat into the comfort of the audience.

Chimes

Group Motion Multi-media Dance Theater's *#shamanicinterfaces* is a series of five scores created in the moment by dancers Katie Bank, Leanne Grieger, Renee Kurz, Darcy Lyons, Katelyn Reiersen, Elizabeth Weinstein and Suzanne Wright. Tim Motzer, musician and composer, provides an ethereal and reactive sound score along with Artistic Director Manfred Fischbeck. The white scrim behind the dancers is colored with visual projections created in real time by video artist Dejha Ti. Everything is improvised—the only prepared content is the instructions for each of the *Interfaces*, which the audience reads in their programs.

Chimes

The transitions are fluid; the thematic gestures develop; the dancers “listen” to each other and perform as though it were rehearsed choreography. Fischbeck rings the chimes and each interface concludes. I've heard the sound before, while meditating in yoga class.

Chimes

*Interface Four:* Fischbeck stands, carrying a silver platter full of folded papers. He hands them to the dancers like hors d'oeuvres at a

party. These are audience-generated prompts submitted in advance in response to Group Motion's request: "You think it. We make it." One dancer quietly shapes two others into three separate tableaux—a beginning, middle and an end. As the lights change, Fischbeck announces "Reflections," and the two performers begin their dance, developing movement based on the verbal and visual prompts. They make their process transparent—working before the audience so that we can recognize the landmarks. It is a mutual process of discovery—the performers and the audience members are equally unaware of how the duet will conclude until we hear the...

#### Chimes

*#shamanicinterfaces* puts the spotlight on the ritualistic nature of performance. The audience and the performers have to enter the theater with an open mind. Everyone meets in the same space and participates, either actively or passively, in creating a unique experience of art. Our concentration is meditative, open and creative. Perhaps we are discovering our own shamanic interface.

*#shamanicinterfaces*, Group Motion Multi-media Dance Theater, Community Education Center, September 20-21,  
<http://fringearts.com/event/shamanicinterfaces-09-20-14/>.

By Kalila Kingsford Smith  
September 22, 2014