

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Bill Hebert

See Beau Run

by Lynn Matluck Brooks

Seven stacks of neatly folded clothing; seven distinct light looks; seven musical works, all from recordings carried aboard Voyager space crafts; six “action words,” suggested by audience members at the start of the performance; one Beau Hancock*. This is the cosmos of *Orion*, which opened the program, “Invited,” for its one-night run.

Run: see Beau sprint, backward, around a stack of clothing, circling the entire stage. See Beau *laugh*, shaking from head to foot, sometimes hilariously, sometimes painfully, sometimes dreamily. Though breathing heavily from exertion, Beau now *flies*, eventually landing and balancing earth-bound—a seagull with its port (another stack of clothing) in distant view. Beau *dives*, next, into pools of light that spring up around his now dispersed clothing stacks. Then, we see Beau, sequentially dropping limbs and torso to the floor, *lying* on his right side, spiraling his chest to the floor in a softened light wash. *Jump*: he moves another clothing stack toward stage center, bounces his body and undulates his arms, as the lighting heats up to red. With the last stack of clothes placed smack center, Beau freely interweaves movements he created earlier in the dance, ending in a calm and simple stance, facing his audience. I am left exhausted and exhilarated at his movement invention, his endurance, his memory, and the complexly structured improvisation he unfolded for us.

Beau Hancock’s second work in the program, *Mooring Field*, also exposed his complex structuring of movement, this time fully choreographed. Marie Brown and Melissa Chisena performed with sensitive precision and flow. I was captivated by the dancers’ concentration, softly spoken counting, subtle differences of movement in almost-synchronized phrases that, at times, pulled apart into exuberant reaches, flings, and turns, always keeping the two dancers moored to their opening spots on the stage. The spell broke for me when the pulsing, insistent music—by Röyksopp & Robin—burst into play, with its relentless demands on my attention. Yet the dancers continued floating on their in-and-out-of-unison, meditative seas, whatever sonic storms pulled and pushed their movement.

The program was shared with, and I gather initiated by, choreographer Caitlin Quinn. Her *Passage* traced the drift and ordered chaos of tumbling paper, shown on a video (by Mariana Smith) against the white backdrop, as dancers Alisa Iacovelli, Morgan O'Shea, and Jaclyn Salerno rose, fell, and sometimes grabbed one another in fleeting attempts to hold the transient. Eloquent performers all, the dancers held their own against, and sometimes with, the black-and-white video. Here, the interplay of live and recorded movement was effectively balanced and integrated—no easy feat to accomplish.

Quinn's *Body Continuum* closed the evening, exposing in movement the five dancers' stories of "the physical impact of injury, childbirth, and ageing [sic]," as the program stated. Performers Quinn and Iacovelli were joined by Macy Collins, Chandra Moss-Thorne, and Asya Zlatina. The set featured five "columns," each created by filmy red panels that dotted the perimeter of the stage. The dancers explored the constraints and potential of these areas for hiding themselves, restricting movement, revealing selected body parts, opening or closing off stage areas, and even supporting their bodies. The articulate dancers—in full control of their movement and the space—stretched, balanced, and extended themselves around the stage, around one another, around the cloth panels. Perhaps because I've been through all the "impacts" their stories sprang from, I "got it" fairly early in the piece, which went on at some length. Judicious editing would strengthen the power of this work, without obscuring each dancer's strengths and the many possibilities of maneuvering the fabric panels to reveal how women navigate time, space, and movement as their bodies bear the impacts of life.

*Beau Hancock is a writer and head of the Education Team for thINKingDANCE.

"Invited," Performance Garage, January 28, <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2734597>

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