

REVIEWS

InFluxdance

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Found Objects and ASL

InFluxdance seems to be a dance company without a home and with directors, artists, and designers from any number of places as diverse as Boston, Salt Lake City, and Charlottesville, VA. How they get together to build and rehearse work is an enigma. Maybe they don't. A history of the company indicates most of their work is presented at Fringe Festivals in the US and Canada, probably none of which were adjudicated beyond a lottery drawing. The company mission states the company has "artistic strengths in various fields including Dance, Video, Lighting Design, Scenic Design, Costume Design, Spoken Text, Theatre, Music and Sound." InFluxdance is presenting a work titled "Found & Lost: Goals for 2002" this week in the Boulder Dairy Center for the Arts Performance Space as part of the 2007 Boulder International Fringe Festival. In their August 22nd performance dance ability was the only artistic strength they claim to own that was evident. And that dance ability was mostly lost in mundane composition with extensive dead spots. Just as mundane was the theatre component, which included over-the-top stereotypical characters set on dancers with no apparent acting ability.

Conceptual in nature "Found And Lost: Goals For 2002" struggled with whatever concepts were intended, never really revealing what those concepts were, or in abstracting any parts of them to create mystery. What resulted was several dance interludes set on excellent dancers placed within an hour of relatively disconnected events, and long interludes of silence while one performer caught the deaf audience up to date in ASL. That audience as small and if any were deaf it was not apparent. As competent as the dancers were much of what they could do was erased in long pauses and stillness that went beyond framing the movement, and like most of the show those dances were taken way past any reasonable performance life. That performance life was further limited by choreography that kept bringing back any number of what became throw away movements like hand stands and rolls.

American Sign Language (ASL) has been successfully incorporated into any number of dance works. The key word is "incorporated." ASL on its own has an artistic performance life best measured in seconds. InFluxdance is to be congratulated in recognizing it as a tool they can use address deaf audience, but long interludes of ASL on a silent and otherwise still stage creates deadly stops in any performance that must then struggle to restart. Throughout the performance InFluxdance made continual attempts to involve the painfully small audience. They gave them props, enlisted them to clean up a

stage littered with flour and/or dozens of keys thrown into the space during a way too long lost key solo, and performers repeatedly sat in the audience between appearances. The audience was tolerant and even reluctantly agreed to some involvement, however, it seems always best to realize that most audience comes to watch a show not to be in it.

As stated above, a major asset of InFluxdance is the dance abilities inherent in many of their performers. With choreography that uses that ability, and keeps any one piece alive, that ability could become a centerpiece of their work. Unfortunately their unsuccessful attempts at artistic diversity place that dance ability in a context where it is lost.

InFluxdance apparently decided to use their own lighting designer rather than the Dairy's Craig Bushman, who has set lighting designs on several Fringe shows, and whose designs always work. The result was mundane lighting on a mundane show that never created any mystery or message at all, and pretty much failed to entertain. As always one needs to recognize that InFluxdance got here and put up their work. That gets an "A" for bravery and dedication.

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