

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Icebox Project Space

Transported to Universes Far Away

by Thomas Choinacky

This is a document of
An uncanny, sensory experience.
I am transported into mental gymnastics.
Three improvisational pieces share vast, new worlds
With vibrant sounds,
Enormous images,
And conceptual movements.

One – a solo

A piercing buzz
It's behind the audience.
Percussionist Ben Bennett waddles in
With a makeshift drum strapped awkwardly to his body.
He is a sound monster
Scraping the drum against the Marley.
The harsh echo of the Icebox amplifies it,
A ship's bellow.
Bennett breathes.

He makes out with the drum,
Gives it a raspberry,
Looking like the face from [Frighteners](#).
He's trying to get the object to shriek for itself.

Bennett attaches himself to multiple instruments or musical tools.
Sliding, shoving, and pulling with all of them
His ephemeral experiments screech.
How do these tools work?
What sound is created as this rubs against that?
A goose call from a makeshift horn.
Pushing his thumb into the middle of the drum,
Bennett pings and twists sticks against various objects.
I imagine getting my eye poked out by one of the sticks.
Ramming, ramming, ramming,
He rams his thigh into the floor.
He repeats with his legs wrapped tightly around the drum,
Euphoric thrusting.
The power of his own body makes the thud.

Two – a duet

A much gentler buzz begins this set.
Jesse Kudler plucks at his guitar,
Creating hums which reverberate for minutes on end.
Christina Gesualdi nimbly explores,
Within the hum,
The mechanics of her body as if asking:
What are the limits of this place?
Or this form?
She lets out a tiny whistle.
She whispers to herself.
She prepares for her discoveries.
Repetitious arm spins.
Toes curling on the floor.
Driving her knees across the ground.
I picture images of labor and acts of survival
As she slides forward.

The two artists wait for each other.
I feel the heat from the dead air in the room.
They continue.
Not much has changed.
Back and forth,
The guitar pick plucks at the air again.

Back and forth,
Gesualdi carries one side more heavily than the other.
She patters around the square space.
One arm holds a curving lightness in the air
As the other hangs at her side.
Each bend and dangle a serene necessity.

Three – an ensemble

We enter another galaxy.
With two overhead projectors,
Erik Ruin uses original, handcut drawings
On the giant white walls of the Icebox.
He projects a starscape.
Spinning and re-focusing the machines,
The 2D drawings come alive.
The stars are glimmering.
Asimina Chremos is a transformative creature.
I shift between watching her and her shadow,
Both forms roaming with Ruin's projections.
With the two of them,
An incredible gathering of musicians:
A cellist, two violinists, a harpist, three guitarists, and a drummer.
Their wall of noises together occupy the universe,
Igniting my imagination in curious ways.
Together we heave forward.

Time is moving at a wild speed.
My human form cannot comprehend.
Chremos goes through a chrysalis and becomes a new alien.
Time shifts.
We go through centuries with the flick
On and off of the projector.
Another universe washes away.
The agile Chremos transforms again,
Her fluid gestures
Inhabiting lifetimes in a handful of minutes.
She is now a bizarre being with no head.
Her foot becomes the eye to her body
And then she sweeps that being away,
She is something else:
Some sort of invertebrate.
The atmosphere shifts,
Stars and skies become woods and waves.
The images realign.

We are, again, somewhere else.

Later in the piece:

Projections of human forms.

I am removed from the epic time and space.

These figures luckily don't last.

I try to ignore them,

Return my brain to time moving beyond human speed.

Another universe appears.

Chremos is the Great Red Spot on Jupiter.

A storm, which exists only as a dot to my human eyes.

Centuries pass.

She becomes something prickly.

Centuries pass.

She is a single wave in a galaxy covered with water.

The musicians are climaxing,

Epic proportions as they clamor together.

Chremos floats in this current world,

Then disappears,

Her body lost amongst the clouds.

Yet my brain can only comprehend them as clouds.

These shapes are something more:

These sounds, these images are universes away,

Speaking a different tongue.

How small am I.

How small we all are.

This universe we are in has lasted,

Survived much longer than human kind.

And it will last much longer beyond us.

Erik Ruin's Ominous Cloud Ensemble, Icebox Project Space, August 19, erikruin.info.

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