

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Mark Wong

Dance Like Dr. Z's Watching

by Miryam Coppersmith

Hello!

Welcome to the Bubble, sponsored by [Dr. Zizmor™](#).

It's a mindset freeing you from the idea that you have to be special.

You're safe, but connected in the Bubble, a circle of twinkle lights on the ground at Urban Movement Arts.

Just don't look for the door.

The Fringe guide describes *You Are Not a Shining Star* as "a movement-based performance that is weird but not boring," and the show delivers on that promise. Dressed in black vests with an Orwellian eye design on the back, performers Mark "Metal" Wong and Vince Johnson fill the Bubble with jaw-dropping dance, monologues satirizing social media influencers, and palpable camaraderie. Metal, who designed the performance, is the talker. Vince is silent, almost puppet-like, following Metal's instructions to smile and dance.

The show moves at breakneck speed. We're taken through new wave, bossa nova, TLC, and Collie Buddz in a brilliant sound mix, as the dance shifts among breaking, house, wacking, locking, and more.

The choreography showcases not just the dancers' ability, but their musicality and eye for narrative. After a fight about Vince's phone, the phone takes over Metal's body. Vince flips the phone casually, causing Metal to flip around on the floor, balance in a one-armed freeze, then crash to the ground.

Often the most virtuosic dancing is performed not for the live audience, but for three iPhones mounted on tripods on the ground. “Like & subscribe!” Metal tells his loyal YouTube followers. He imparts wisdom about how to achieve greatness, and answers followers’ questions about life in the bubble. Vince has been searching for the door, Metal tells us, but Metal’s long since forgotten where it is. Vince tells us a different story later in the show, their competing accounts creating a paradox of paranoia.

In the end, they decide to “resynchronize,” by getting rid of the negativity that’s been creeping into the Bubble. They don purple blindfolds and face each other. Characters melt away as the two men prepare for a final dance. Blindly, they fight, kicking in between each others’ legs, dodging slaps aimed for heads, miming choking. They dance faster and faster; Vince ducks just in time to miss Metal’s hands. The danger is real and palpable. With their coolness stripped away, the dancers are truly vulnerable at this last moment—no longer safe, no longer protected by the Bubble.

[You Are Not a Shining Star](#), Mark “Metal” Wong and Vince Johnson, Urban Movement Arts, 2019 Fringe Festival, September 7-22.

By Miryam Coppersmith
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