

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Marina Cherry

An Ungainly Kind of Gorgeous

by **Emilee Lord**

It starts with a light coming straight down on a body in 2nd position plie, hands on knees, elbows pointed skyward, hair falling forward that conceals a face. Under the light is a body broken, locking and unlocking in shapes meant for the possessed in horror films. The fluidity that unfolds over the course of this 45-minute solo is at once ungainly and other worldly, and so physically present, that it feels graceful.

[Marina Cherry](#), a professional contortionist, performs her solo piece *Only Bones v. 1.6* as a follow-up piece to the original *Only Bones* by [Thomas Monckton](#). Cherry uses his same constraints in the creation of her piece. Scenes are cued by light and sound. Each section has its own character, from inhuman, to odd, beautifully unhinged, tormented ritual, cast out, lost. There is also a moment I can only describe as grumpy. Is it possible to be both strange and serious? To act out with great solemnity the very absurdity of our being? It certainly appears so here.

Cherry has an exceptional command. She is all joints, breaks, and melting spine. She moves through scenes with upended grace. Certain characters were less interesting, for me, than others, but there was a constant physical prowess worth watching. She worked seamlessly from large circling gestures to small fingers pulsing and facial contortions that left the room ringing with laughter. This is the first time that I have laughed out loud and felt horrified within a single piece. I do wonder, what if I had been given a break to digest one character before switching to the next? And would clarity in her spine, rather than constant motion, have made her bends more powerful?

Cherry performs from a very particular and solitary place. I was left thinking that this was less a performance for us and more a rite carried out for personal relief or growth or satisfaction. It is not entirely clear that this dancer - sometimes creature - knows or cares that we are present. In the end it seems so farcical and bewildering that she must surely mean to be performing the grotesque and hilarious

fact of humanness. Not every section of this piece is for everyone, but I feel confident that every viewer will find a slice of what they need here. A must see in Fringe's satellite [Cannonball Festival](#).

Only Bones v. 1.6, Marina Cherry, MAAS Studio Building, Fringe Festival 2021, Sept. 9 - 15

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