

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Maria Baranova

Kyle Marshall's Film "Stellar" Takes Us On A Voyage

by Lauren Putty White

[Kyle Marshall Choreography](#) presented an other-worldly dance film, *Stellar*, as a part of the Fringe Festival this year. Knowing the inspiration came from the transcendent music of [Sun Ra](#) and [Alice Coltrane](#), I was already drawn to the theme of this work. The film welcomes me with dancers in tie dye rainbow hoodies and sweatpants, sparkles twinkling, subtly accentuating their colorful clothing. In slow motion, Kyle Marshall, Bree Breeden, and Ariana Speight carve through the space, their limbs controlled and sustained. Pause, live, breathe, move, repeat. Watching the dancers create pathways with their extremities pulls me into their trance. They are fluid in their locomotion, pensive and internally focused. Layered sounds of live instrumentation by [Kwami Winfield](#) permeate my ears as the dancers physically echo these sounds with ease and articulation. They walk in circles, moving one direction, not following each other, still heading somewhere, to another planet perhaps.

Suddenly the rhythm makes an abrupt change, and I am overpowered by the clapping of the dancers' hands and live percussion by Winfield. The sound dictates the rhythmic pulse of every step and hip roll. Each dancer takes a turn in the middle of the floor while the others stand back and accompany Winfield. The soloists travel against and through the beat. A pleasant piano solo catches me by surprise as Marshall's head takes a windy path, following the piano's melodic indecision. Lights dim as the dancers seem to take on different physical forms that blend like chameleons into the space, moving along the ground, up against the wall, and in between stage lights. Space is definitely the place.

The dancers are now wearing the hoodies on their heads, and they seem to have transformed into something ethereal, not of this realm. I am convinced they are catching stars, walking on air. The camera rotates and I am beginning to see double, like there are twice as many dancers on stage than there were before. Stillness. It's still the same three bodies. The soundscape is forever evolving, transferring me to another dimension, ranging from electronic tracks, undertones of the keyboard, and overtones of the synthesizer. I snap out of it, and it's over.

Stellar helped me escape from reality for a little while, and I was grateful for the lift!

[Stellar](#), Kyle Marshall Choreography, Fringe Festival 2021, Sept. 24-25

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