

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Xavier Claudio

Finding the Words: Write Back Atcha Visits Miniball

by Rhonda Moore

[Theatre Philadelphia](#) and [thINKingDANCE](#) continue our partnership, begun in 2018, bringing coverage and new perspectives to Philadelphia's vibrant theatre scene.

Parallel vulnerability camping in aloneness

Three spatial dimensions juxtaposed with runaway bells

The obvious and the subtle

Attention, care, forgiveness, mitosis, miosis

Reminds me of friends making up afterwards

The edge of the cliff

These poems are inspired by the words and reactions of audience members at Company to X For's April 5 performance of [Surface Tension](#), part of Miniball Festival, organized and sponsored by Almanac Dance Circus Theater at the MAAS Building. As an audience, our primary activities are to observe, interpret, and eventually understand what is happening before and all around us. This is in contrast to the single-mindedness a performer might have, directing their actions and intentions towards delivering the results of their work. For the audience, it is during this process of observation that sense memories, images, affinities, aversions, and seemingly random thoughts emerge. It is this cerebral landscape that aids our ability to understand and in some way relate to what we are watching.

As part of our continued interest in engaging with, thinking about, and writing about dance, thiNKingDANCE leads Write Back Atcha sessions, where audience members share what they remember and have written down about a dance performance immediately after viewing a show.

Our recent Write Back Atcha generated a cornucopia of words from audience members at *Surface Tension*. Viewers were invited to jot down brief notes while watching a delightful duet by Liam Bradley and David Chervony, founders of this Chicago-based company. Just before the show began, the audience was encouraged to consider the following prompts:

- Everything is like something else. Keep a tally of all the experiences or images that come (even fleetingly) to your mind as you watch the work tonight.
- Often, larger experiences can be captured by a striking moment that encapsulates something essential about them. During the performance, keep an eye/ear out for a “snapshot” image/gesture/bit of dialogue that speaks to the piece as a whole.

At the end, we wound up with a rich tapestry of thoughts, perceptions, images, recognitions, flashes, visceralities, inklings, and déjà vùs, from eight audience members who shared their thoughts while sitting around a warm and welcoming stove in MAAS' outdoor garden. Animated discussion ensued, all of it charged with the familiarity of people who have just shared an experience, offered up words, lost themselves in thought, and dropped their guard, if only for this moment.

Our goal was to discuss and then craft and publish audience-generated writing about *Surface Tension*, but the vocal feedback and discussion was so rich and densely charged with multiple layers of thought that all material gathered was instead put into a repository for eventual literary manipulation.

As self-appointed (with permission!) “Audience Wordsmith,” I have accessed the responses of participating audience members, creating these poems and accompanying word cloud as a representation of their commentary about *Surface Tension*. The word cloud illustration was created through a subjective selection of font, dimension, layout, and general design. My—also subjective—rendering of a collective comment on the duet is presented in two diverse iterations of the Haiku: the traditional 5-7-5 syllable three-line format, and the poetically-licensed 5-7-5 word format over three lines (above). Another literary manipulation resulted in the suggestion of alternate titles for *Surface Tension*. While these poetic responses were sparked by conversations in the room, the results presented here are forged and flavored with my personal considerations or afterthoughts.

Haikus:

Patience, skill, prowess

Trusting falls and balances

Redemption abounds

'Merican Gothic

A trusting relationship

Kinetic sculpture

Your Origami

Sounds of sand and hands remind

Make room for mistakes

Alternate Titles:

Into the Cat's Cradle and Out

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

Who's Sorry Now?

I've Looked at Love From Both Sides Now

Dio li fa, Poi li Accoppia

Read Between the Lines

Partners in Crime



[Surface Tension](#), Company to X For, Miniball presented by Almanac Dance Circus Theater, April 3-8.

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