

# thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Amber Johnston

## I present a present presently

by nikolai mckenzie ben rema

"You know what past I miss?...the Primordial Ooze. Don't you miss that?"

For tD's first Write Back Atcha of the 2022 Cannonball Festival, I facilitated a reflection on Megan Mazarick's *Vapors*, a work made up of worlds within worlds; worlds made of the fluidity/absurdity and impermanence/inevitability of time where it can be stuffed and frozen inside an icebox, but then with the flick of a translucent tissue -- or a pile of them stacking on bones like a winter blizzard does to everything it freezes -- time can accumulate/elongate and backflip on itself. We reflected on how movements and images from *Vapors* landed and resonated in our bodies as well as on how logic and linear expression dissipate and recollect during the show. Some reflections from the generous and thoughtful folks who shared are below:

[Daniel]

Discrete v. fluid

Communal processing vs. individualism

1. At first the disjointedness of the future reminded me of the times when my brain or body skipped a step, and I felt disoriented as a result (similar but different to the mind-loop concept). But I felt the performers coalesced as time went on and there were moments of fluidity and intentional communication...of course those moments were still interspersed with breaks and interruptions as well.
2. The diving after tissue paper felt like trying to hang onto order and logic, while the performer casting off the tissues was clearly outside that logic. Later in the show, the same "diving" character is surrounded by the rest of the performers blowing, throwing, and casting away tissues. The character this time embraces the "disorder," while lip syncing to a tongue-in-cheek monologue song.

[Miryam]

Logic disappears

Logic reappears

Logic gets caught in a loop

She fans herself with a tissue, a tissue of time, she tosses away

Time Flies. {can time be stuffed in a box}

Time lands on her head. She wears a dress of time.

Logic reveals herself in the twitch of a head

In a duet smoothly reversed

In a few words spoken about the choreographer's ailing father.

Logic disappears, carried away by a joke, some lines of dialogue flittered away by tissue papers of time. {Fast forward jump and sink in time}

Time can be flourished by human hands.

[Jonathan]

Thinking of time as vapors, circulating in spurts of accelerating forces or slowed down as a fog inching through our vision and then frozen around us. And time vapors when embodied can catapult us into the future or retreat into a primordial past. Megan Mazarick's *Vapors* explores the fluidity and impermanence of time, but through a lens of physical comedy where time threads flicker white with floating tissues that mock the adventures of her time expeditions.

[Anito]

Time, Space, PLAY

Futurism, caricature

Time, Space, PLAY

Accelerating

Decelerating

Patterns of destruction, paused.

Til next time

Slow motion for me

Time, Space, PLAY

What are we laughing about? HAhaHa, Cha cha cha, are you not on the beat on purpose?

Time, Space, PLAY

[Elizabeth]

slipping, shimmying, stuttering automatons, marionettes, robots, music box, mime, carrying frozen shapes and charms. Wandering through different memories, masquerading as places. Stuckness, smoothe, slick, stammering unisons that lapse and loop but are controlled by the same force.

[nikolai]

Time's threads accumulate and dissipate throughout an ever-morphing space, making a mockery of our attempts to contain them with boxes named "past," "present," "a portal to another world." A mockery that coalesces into etched and re-etched movements, less and less like the first time each time, like a photocopy of a photocopy of the same. We're left with the impression of what was done and said, and the space held during. This sense of clinging to a ritual, an almost innate repetition, that one can now no longer fully articulate, comes palpably close to the foot of the audience when one of Mazarick's many shining moments reveals her own father's struggles with fleeting, unclaimed memory as he and family cope with a deteriorating mind. This sharing of a deep mourning for a past that flies off as easily as a tissue all while reconciling a very real present brings home the clarity of Mazarick's grappling with the inevitability of the procession of time.

[Vapors](#), Megan Mazarick, Icebox Project Space, Sept.1-3.

Tags: Megan Mazarick, dance theater, Icebox, Cannonball festival.

By nikolai mckenzie ben rema

September 27, 2022