

David Pressault: four short works

BY JANET FRENCH

Contemporary dance comes in many shapes and forms. In the case of David Pressault, it is the human body's shape and form itself that fuels the inspiration for his works. On Oct. 29-31, Pressault presented *Four Short Works* at the Du Maurier Theatre at Neptune.

Much of Pressault's work stems from tales of characters in Greek mythology. The piece *Tantalus* was inspired by a painting by Kim Douglass-Harrison. In Greek mythology Tantalus was a character who angered the gods and was condemned to stand in receding waters with fruit which was just beyond his reach, thus causing eternal insatiable thirst and hunger. The piece itself was highly sculptural and innovative.

However, although the movement demonstrated suffering and struggle, this seemed to be the only parallel between the piece and the myth. In fact, if one hadn't read the program beforehand, one might not have guessed that the piece bore any relation to the myth of Tantalus at all.

The piece *Iphigenia* is a solo for a woman, and was danced by former Toronto Dance Theatre scholar Day Helesic. *Iphigenia* is intended to represent the confined exploration of a man's feminine side. Like *Tantalus*, this piece was slow and exploratory, focusing more on the sculpture of the body

than movement. The myth of Iphigenia tells the story of a daughter betrayed by her father and lead by him unknowingly to her own sacrifice. The costume was quite reminiscent of the original movie made to recount the mythological trials of Iphigenia. However, the choreography had little to do with the actual Greek myth. Indeed, the piece was a little too static and slow-motion, with a lot of repetition. On a more positive note, the movement itself was highly unique.

The piece *Croix* is described as a development of the "right relationship between a man and his anima," an anima being "a personification of all feminine tendencies in a man's psyche." Although only an excerpt from this piece was shown, it proved to be quite fascinating as Pressault manipulated a flailing Helesic around the stage. Although the music set a sombre mood, the movement in this piece was lively, dramatic and ingenious. *Croix* also allowed Pressault and Helesic to demonstrate their impressive agility.

The evening concluded with the world premiere of *The Bleeding Piano*. This solo by Pressault contained much contrast between quick and flowing movement and absolute stillness. This piece was the most enjoyable of the evening because it did contain a great deal of movement rather than sculpture.

Most notably, *The Bleeding Piano* demonstrated Pressault's astounding dance technique. It is not so much Pressault's strength and flexibility that astound, but how smooth and flowing his movements are. When he dances, it appears that he is entirely frictionless, for every movement rolls so smoothly into the next. *The Bleeding Piano* is a consuming and fascinating work.

Pressault claims that his work is merely the best way he knows how to conduct self-exploration.

"For my audience," says Pressault, "I wish to be a link to their own self-questioning and awareness. My work is about personal evolution and understanding."

Pressault is successful at reaching his goal, for his choreography is certainly thought provoking.



David Pressault and Day Helesic in *Croix*.

photo by John Lauener

Lindy
Lindy
Aquarius



A musician like Lindy poses such a threat to my senses. This is good, you may think. Well, maybe not.

Lindy isn't a bad musician — in fact, his self-titled CD sounds damn good. It's nice to listen to, especially given my preference for comfortable roots/folk music.

But, as much as I appreciate musical skill, I appreciate creativity a whole hell of a lot more.

And this is why Lindy grates on my ears — because Bob Dylan already exists. No offence to Lindy, he's good — honest, but he's competing with (or trying to be) a legend we already have.

I'm sure Lindy would name Dylan as his major influence (as many artists today would), and I'm guessing he didn't consciously sit down and try to be Bob.

But his own ears should have told him, upon listening to his demo tapes, "wait a minute, we've heard this before". His disc sounds like it was made by an intelligent musician — potentially smart enough to take Dylan's lead down a different path rather than re-hash it with a faux 90s twist. As the record played on, I hoped that he'd

be clever and daring enough to push the envelope past Dylan's stretch marks.

But he wasn't, and therein lies the battle over my wits.

Lots of other musicians today are rediscovering the 60s and 70s. And most, like Lindy, are giving great sounding, studio-enhanced re-enactments of performances made legendary in that time — all the while citing themselves as the

composers of these songs.

My problem is this: Lindy is bright enough to realize the wealth inherent in that era of music. He's good enough to capture it and make it sound agreeable. Why is he not brash enough to make it sound different?

As I said, I really appreciate creativity.

GREG MCFARLANE

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