

ARTS & CULTURE

Committed: an exercise in comic choreography

BY JANET FRENCH

A tantalizing combination of works ranging from morose to delightfully silly best describes choreographer Veronique MacKenzie-Bourne's latest creation, *Committed*. On Oct. 1 and 2, four of MacKenzie-Bourne's wackiest explorations of movement came to life at the Dunn Theatre.

Humour was the prevailing theme of the evening, for there was much blatant physical humour, but also some more subtle situational and emotional humour in the pieces. "The Seeds of Time" is a piece that stretched the limits of the imagination, with bizarre, colourful costumes and eccentric movements. Inspired by the short story *Pawley's Peepholes*, an exploration of the ideas about time travel in the 1950s, "The Seeds of Time" is an eclectic take on an average citizen's encounter with some zany futuristic visitors. Wildly hilarious, this piece kept the audience in perpetual fits of laughter.

"In the Wings" was yet

another effervescent piece, depicting the reality of backstage occurrences in contrast to the fantasy world and untenable perfection that the audience sees on stage during a performance. This spoof was created to remind the audience that despite talent and hard work, performers are indeed human and are equally susceptible to exhaustion, injury and of course, chain smoking.

With the introduction of such a character whose presence instills immediate fear into the hearts of all the dancers, this piece also takes a stab at the pretentiousness of more prestigious dancers and choreographers.

"Vent," a musically unaccompanied piece, explored the ultimate frustration and anger that life sometimes brings. It appears that MacKenzie-Bourne feels that the ultimate outlet for this frustration is... a telephone book! An emotional quartet, "Vent" explained that phone books can be thrown, stomped on, yelled at, and have their pages ripped to very

small shreds in a matter of seconds. A physical explanation of a mental breakdown, "Vent" accurately portrays what we do inside of our minds every day when feeling such intense frustration.

Inspired by a *Discover* story of a bog-preserved mummy found in Denmark, termed the "Huldremose Woman," "Crypt" is a haunting and eerie exploration of

physical and emotional remains. Netting, cobwebs and much flowing material kept these escaping souls tangled in their physical pasts. Overall, *Committed* was an impressive collection that teased the audience and pushed MacKenzie-Bourne's creative limits to the unimaginable.

Of the prevailing humour in her pieces, MacKenzie Bourne says

"I'm an observer of human behaviour and of the human condition. Can I help it if a lot of what I see is funny?"

Although she brings ideas to life that seem initially crazy and unfathomable, MacKenzie-Bourne and the talented dancers who brought her visions to life should be commended rather than "committed."

Tribe bids adieu with fifth album

BY KARAN SHETTY

Being a rabid fan, I admit it's a bit hard to stand back and be objective in my appraisal of A Tribe Called Quest's newest (and presumably last) album, *The Love Movement*.

The songs may mean a lot more to a person like myself, who owns all four previous albums and has traced the evolution of their music since the release of their ground-breaking *People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm* album back in 1990. Tribe's decision to disband this summer is based, they insist, on professional rather than personal reasons. The group feels that they have said everything they could possibly say and don't want to turn out music that isn't real. After the lukewarm reception to their last album, *Beats, Rhymes and Life*, A Tribe Called Quest is wary about putting out albums that do not live up to the standards of their first three classics.

Ali Shaheed Muhammad, Tribe's DJ, was quoted in this month's issue of *The Source* as saying, "It'll just get worse [until]

it doesn't mean anything to anyone. And while it does mean something to us, and to people — our fan base and our peers — we wanna leave it on that high note."

Do they succeed? The answer is a not-so-enthusiastic "yes". While *The Love Movement* has a couple of tracks which can stand in comparison with anything from Tribe's previous albums, there are a few sloppy compositions which keep this release from achieving "classic" status. The first single from the album, "Find a Way", is solid enough to keep fans happy and catchy enough to get radio play. Other tracks which stand out are "Busta's Lament", "Hot 4 U" and the album's opener, "Start it Up", where Q-Tip showcases lyrical ingenuity and creative delivery reminiscent of "Skypager".

Not to be outdone, Phife also delivers in "His Name is Muttley Ranks" by revealing his well known talent for coming at you with a barrage of innovative rhymes. One improvement on the last album is the more obvious co-operation between Tip and Phife, whose vocal chemistry had so much to do with the success of their first three

albums. The weak tracks on the album suffer from having choruses that are just a little too cheesy. The chorus in "Like it Like That" ruins what would have been a perfectly good song.

Since the release of *Midnight Marauders*, which is undoubtedly Tribe's most accomplished album and worth its weight in platinum to hiphop aficionados everywhere, the group has been cursed with having to always duplicate their success with all their subsequent releases. While *Beats, Rhymes and Life* was in no way Tribe's best album, it came under harsh criticism because everyone expected it to be even greater than *Midnight Marauders*. Like *Beats, Love Movement* will always be an under-rated album because it lacks the level of inspiration which gave birth to *Marauders*.

Regardless of the public's verdict on this new album, Tribe's place as one of hiphop's great innovators remains secure. If Tribe kept their credibility intact even after playing *Lollapalooza*, I'm sure they'll survive a little critical backlash.



Veronique MacKenzie-Bourne's *Committed*, at the Dunn.

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