

Momentum 2: New Dance Works

Momentum 2007 Choreographer

July 19-21, 2007
Southern Theater
Minneapolis, MN

Independent artist Cathy Wright choreographs modern dance with a raw and highly emotional movement vocabulary that explores the hidden realms of the psyche. Return, created for eight dancers, depicts a journey from entrapment to liberation as Wright examines gender roles both primitive and modern, within environments natural and urban.

Text and voice by Cathy Wright
Set by Cathy Wright
Costumes by Cathy Wright

Reviews:

"Cathy's work is as compact and rich as a Godiva truggle, but by no means a cheap sugar rush. Her concepts have bite and her cleanly-rehearsed phrases resonate with character and assurance." John Munger

of Wright's solo performance of "1-self" at Bryant Lake Bowl (February 2007) which will open her production of Return as a part of the Momentum Series:

"Mysterious and strange." Justin Jones

"Haunting."

"We all really felt it."

"Potent."



Providing a snapshot of Minnesota's dance landscape, the always-popular Momentum illuminates the skill and passion of the next generation's most promising artists. Featuring two companies each evening, Momentum showcases new voices and ideas that speak to the latest combinations in dance while solidifying the Twin Cities as a hotbed of fresh, experimental, and often under-the-radar talent. This year Maggie Bergeron and Company, Justin Jones, Off-Leash Area, and Cathy Wright each premiere new works co-commissioned and copresented by the Walker and the Southern with support from the Jerome Foundation.

Off-Leash Area: Our Perfectly Wonderful Lives

Recipient of multiple Ivey Awards and City Pages' 2005 Artist of the Year title, Off-Leash Area draws from the persona and artwork of Andy Warhol in Our Perfectly Wonderful Lives. In a journey that mirrors Warhol's rise to superstardom, the dancers comically portray an experiment in constructing a utopia that goes tragically wrong.

Cathy Wright: Return

Independent artist Cathy Wright choreographs modern dance with a highly emotional movement vocabulary that explores the darker realms of the psyche. Return, created for eight dancers, combines original music with lyrics and vocals by Wright, depicts a journey from entrapment to liberation, and examines primitive and modern gender roles within environments both natural and urban.

July 23, 2007

Review by Camille LeFevre

Camille LeFevre gives us her take on the second weekend of Momentum: Cathy Wright and Off-Leash Area are wild and wonderful.

Wow. Where did Cathy Wright come from? And do her colleagues at Apple Valley High School run and hide, or flatten themselves against the wall, when she walks by? One has to ask, because if her dark, ritualistic work "Return" is any indication, she's "into some seriously heavy shit" (as one of her high-school students might say). And we'd all better pay attention, because it's good. Intriguing. Weird. Fantastical. Creepy, even. But good.

Wright's five-part work opened the second weekend of Momentum: New Dance Works—probably the series' most consistent run ever in terms of high-quality performance innovation and professional execution.

But first, Wright, whose bio says she "was a devoted fan of film directors David Lynch and Ridley Scott in her pre-teens" and that she created films in high school. That makes sense, given the cinematic, otherworldly quality of "Return." Part fairytale, part Wiccan ritual, the work features Wright in wig of long red hair crouched away from a figure in black, hunched in front of a copper-colored scrim topped with hair, and scrunching animalistically across the floor.

Hair, my *Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* tells me, plays a critical role in witch-charms and is believed to function as a repository of the soul. In "Return," Wright thrashes beneath her veil of red hair, extracts hanks of hair from a box, and whips those hair hanks through the air or across the floor like some sort of priestess in a wild, pre-conscious state.

There's also a section in which three men (Christopher LaPlante, Alex Loch, Dustin Maxwell), bathed in red light and fueled by composer Matthew S. Smith's raucous score, engage in a testosterone tangle of break-dance moves, cartwheels, head thrashes, preening and body slamming. They could be in a mosh pit at some underground rave or on the outlying fringes of a parallel universe.

Five women dressed like rag-tag poppets with their little hats, leggings, necklaces and layered tops, gesture and pose to Smith's oozy music. They grab their butts, jut their hips and twist their arms in ritualistic aerobics, then cool down as a voice in the soundscape intones, "breathe." (That's Wright, whom Smith recorded as she read her journals.) This is no ordinary day at the gym, however, as these women bring to mind a coven energetically casting a spell.

A sleepy, dreamlike section follows, in which the dancers, in white pajama outfits, toss and spin each other about, and move through yoga poses as two deities look on. Wright's shaman closes out the piece. As she heaves, tosses, and flings herself across the floor, images morph rapid-fire on the wall behind her, as if her life were literally flashing before her eyes. They conclude with a kindly pantheistic image: a tree. But "Return" is nature red in tooth and claw, death and rebirth with a speed-metal score, a grunge aesthetic, and terrifying inconclusiveness.

For more information, go to:

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