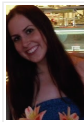


Meg Johnson

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2011

ABOUT ME



Meg Johnson

Meg is short for Margaret. My poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Slipstream Magazine,

U.S. 1 Worksheets, Left Behind: A Journal of Shock Literature, Asinine Poetry, Pacific Coast Journal, Radioactive Moat, Word Riot, WTF PWM, Blood Lotus, The Battered Suitcase, and Camroc Press Review. I've also published poems in the Yahara Journal and fiction in the Edgewood Review. My poem "Free Samples" was recently nominated for Best of the Net. I'm a dance teacher/faculty member at a dance school in downtown Madison and a principal dancer in one of the resident companies at Overture Center for the Arts. I've presented choreography in various venues including the Overture Center. I've also worked as an actress through agencies I'm signed with in Milwaukee and Chicago.

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My Evaluation of "2nd Skin" for the Madison Arts Commission

In December, I was asked to evaluate *2nd Skin*, a dance concert, for the Madison Arts Commission. I thought I would share part of my evaluation here...

I recently attended *2nd Skin*, a dance concert performed by Ella Rosewood Dance. I saw the Saturday show on December 11th which was performed at Music Hall for a small but attentive audience. I hope the audience for this young company continues to grow.

The concert consisted of six solos performed by Ella Rosewood. Each piece was created by a different choreographer. Rosewood commissioned five choreographers to create solos for her and choreographed one of the pieces herself.

I thought it was a wise move to open with the work Ms. Rosewood created, allowing the veteran choreographers' work to be the focus of the concert. Rosewood's piece, *Shadows of Incandescence*, required athleticism and technique yet it never resorted to predictable dance class choreography. The dancer, dressed in a fitted, legless, flesh colored costume, threw her body across the stage and to the floor, finding quirky gestures along the way. Turns and balances, which happened around a light fixture prop center stage, were all given new twists.

I enjoyed getting to see choreography by Florida State professor Tim Glenn and New York based Beth Soll as I had not yet had the chance to see their choreography before.

In Beth Soll's *Knowing/Not Knowing*, I was taken with a reoccurring movement that expressed both power and vulnerability. Standing in profile to the audience, Rosewood stood on her downstage leg with her upstage leg in a parallel coupe. With her arms outstretched to her sides, she turned her head slowly from looking straight forward to looking out at the audience.

In Tim Glenn's *Silk by Night*, it was memorable when, leaning back in the downstage right corner of the stage, Rosewood smoothly freed one of her legs from a string of white fabric. There was a projection screen used for this piece and I enjoyed how more than one of the pieces in this concert incorporated technology.

In Luc Vanier's *Farewell Beautiful World*, Rosewood danced with a computer screen and comically stated "I'm separating myself . . . from myself."

Throughout the various pieces, I noticed how the lighting enhanced the overall movement. However, there were many times when I would have liked to see more light on Rosewood's face so that I didn't lose her facial expressions.

Li Chiao-Ping's *Rust/Rise/Reset* was another great vehicle for Rosewood's athleticism. The majority of the movement of the piece takes place on a mattress-like surface, yet the movement is incredibly intense.

I thought Janet Lilly's *Regret* was a great piece to close the show with. In an oversized white dress resembling a night gown, Rosewood seemed to lovingly attack Lilly's movement and it felt as if she was referencing the pieces she had previously performed that evening. While the piece was titled *Regret* it ended the concert on a hopeful note.

It can be hard to perform a one-person show without it coming off as self indulgent, but this concert never felt that way to me. The educational outreach component of this project helped with this. Rosewood worked with seven schools in Dane county through interactive performance workshops. I hope that Ella Rosewood Dance continues its outreach work. I can imagine Rosewood doing terrific work with young students.

My guess is that Rosewood is hungry to have more dancers in her new company. Every piece in *2nd Skin* was well crafted and performed. A problem with a concert of this type (solo

show) is that it lacks the element of surprise. Each piece offered exciting moments, but having six solos in a row made the concert feel somewhat formulaic. However, this kind of concert requires extreme stamina and to see a dancer fulfill this is an accomplishment in itself.

Posted by Meg Johnson at 8:54 AM 

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