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Australian Dance Theatre with Lois Greenfield

By ALEX WHEATON

Together, Australian Dance Theatre's Garry Stewart and New York City's Lois Greenfield have shown how to join and polish the art forms of dance and photography in the digital age. This is entertainment which is made of the moment and demands an excellence, a technical mastery, which cannot be guessed at.

As the dancers fly on a bare set, Greenfield is positioned at the lap of the stage, poised for the critical moment. She triggers the camera's flash (powerful strobes) and the image is taken. There are no second chances, and Greenfield has to be positioned perfectly – and the dancers must perform precisely as required. In a way, it's *reductio ad absurdum*: a company of dancers perform, and a photographer documents the dance, the results of which are then flashed onto a pair of giant screens almost instantaneously. But it's much, much more than that... Greenfield is working with a sliver of time so thin, so microcosmic, that it becomes an artifact itself. Why? Because the image she captures – dancers twisting in mid-air – is so fast the human eye cannot identify it unaided. Even more, simply because of her presence, and the technical requirements of her crafts, the choreography is to a degree, directed – perhaps 'informed' is a better conceptual word here – in a way which it would not be were the ADT dancers going through an 'ordinary' performance.

The huge screens become centre stage when Greenfield is not shooting, forming at one time a huge cinema screen showing video of dancers in slow motion, at another forming pulsing Mondrian-esque light screens behind the dancers.

Accompanied by a pulverising soundtrack ranging from dance to proto-bass to Death Metal, the aesthetics of this performance were beyond reproach

HELD is innocent and it is arrogant; it is rude, it is poetic; it is elegant, it is punk; it is yesterday, it is postapocalyptic; it is coolly dismissive, it is sexy as hell. This is extraordinary art.

I have but one serious objection to make: costumes. Decked out in black rags cum post punk/feral/tatters some of the dancers looked like rejects from the sort of film some twenty years ago which starred Molly Ringwald and which effectively ended her career. Heavens, Graeme Murphy used to do it at Sydney Dance in the mid-nineties, and it looked like some appalling fashion show (without the catwalk) back then.

This is a dance performance you should not miss. Not if it is within your earthly bounds. I implore you, if you have even a passing interest in contemporary dance, do not miss what I suspect might be the opportunity of a lifetime.

www.loisgreenfield.com