

ARTS & CULTURE

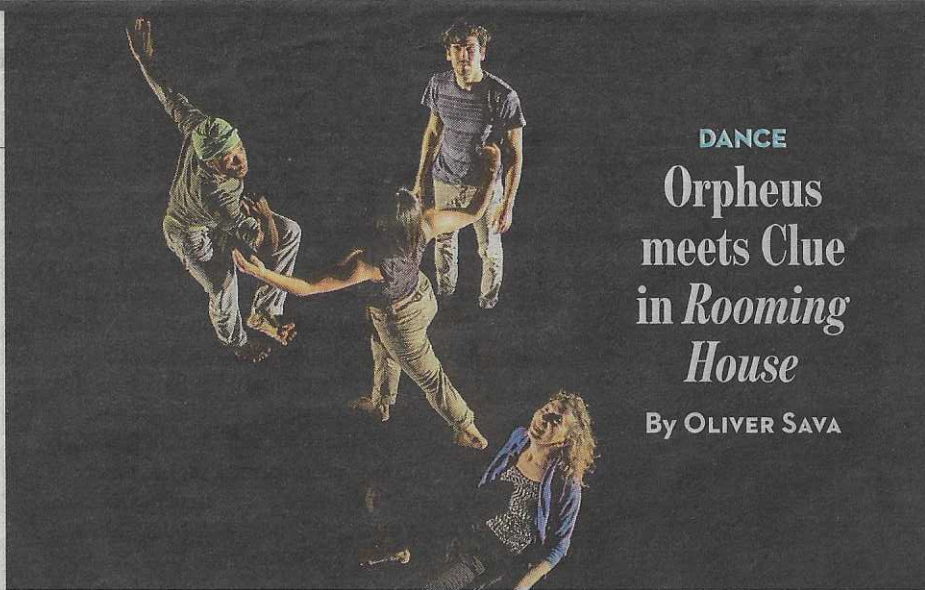
The world is littered with adaptations of the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, but the Greek myth is just a seed for the creator-directors of *Rooming House*, Julia Rhoads of Lucky Plush Productions and Leslie Buxbaum Danzig, a cofounder of 500 Clown. Over its brisk 75 minutes their light-footed, sometimes cheeky production grows into something expansive and challenging, exploring deeper aspects of storytelling and human behavior through Lucky Plush's signature blend of insight and play.

Rooming House begins with the ensemble of six dancers pondering the myth to establish the central question of the show: Why did it happen? The "it" is a constantly changing situation, starting with the mythological moment when Orpheus looks behind him on his journey out of the underworld, dooming his young wife to death when she steps away from resurrection. The ensemble enact various interpretations of this scenario through dance, including one version where a voguing Orpheus performs a death drop after encountering three mean girls representing the Fates.

As the ensemble explore Orpheus's decision from different angles, they come up with a new system for examining any situation motivated by human behavior. Based on the board game Clue, this system looks at who is responsible, what motivates them, and at which point in the narrative. Was it the action taker fueled by duty in the backstory? Perhaps a provocateur driven by fear during the event? Each narrative point is represented by a space on

the blank stage, and each space has its own choreographed sequence that dictates how the performers move.

This system is complicated, and the show acknowledges that. But it also provides a fascinating framework for the creative team to break down individual components of a consequential moment while energizing the story analysis with sharp, emotive movement. This analysis becomes more personal as the



DANCE

Orpheus meets Clue in *Rooming House*

By OLIVER SAVA

Lucky Plush dancers Aaron R. White, Kara Brody, Michel Rodriguez Cintra, and Meghann Wilkinson

ALAN EPSTEIN

production delves into moments from the performers' lives: Rodolfo Sánchez Sarracino's decision to leave Cuba, Michel Rodriguez Cintra cutting ties with a childhood friend, Elizabeth Luse's father stopping a robbery in progress.

Luse's story inspires a fabulous song from Aaron R. White, who struts around the stage as he makes a case for a two-piece swimsuit as a responsible party. And while all the performers are engaging and multifaceted, Cintra is an especially exuberant presence onstage, his bubbly enthusiasm expressed at one point in a sequence that has him swept off the ground to soar above his costars.

Throughout, the action moves in all sorts of unexpected directions into spontaneous bouts of movement. The result is a dynamic production as intricate and slick as it is open and seemingly off-the-cuff. **RR ROOMING HOUSE** Through 11/18: Wed-Sat 8 PM, Steppenwolf, 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted, 312-335-1650, luckyplush.com, \$40. \$30 seniors and military, \$15 students.

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