

I would like to share with you some of my description and response from a very enjoyable night of performance.

I had never seen **Olivia** dance before, and was taken in by her turning, sinewy reaches and contractions, and by her exuberance.

Breathe, happiness, a wringing out of her limbs and torso. Developing themes with increasing vigour and virtuosity. Joyful abandonment at times. Turning and spinning-trying out and testing her muscles. For me, like a foal springing about on a bright morning in a green paddock.

Occasional small still gestures break up the movement. At these moments, was she waiting at the bus stop - or perhaps remembering something important but long forgotten. Fairly often she was with her back to the audience, and then turning once to share a playful grin.

For me there was something of a metamorphosis going on in the piece. Midstream of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly.

Great fun and exhilarating to watch.

**Melanie** plays descending notes that drop and slide down the cello.

**Ashley** and **Keira** start close to the cellist. Still and leaning against each other. Moving when the music moves. Still when the music stops.

Slowly the dancing develops, with the music, into more continuous movement.

A hand on a clavicle, with the leaning weight of a body behind the hand, pushes through into a sequence of movement. The direction of force through the hand is followed into an elegant tumbling. The momentum, and line of movement, continues past where I expect it to stop, and emerges suddenly into stillness with one body poised, at the waist, on the shoulder of the other, gazing out to an imagined horizon.

They play with push and pull, balance and counterbalance. Several times following a line from one of the pulls or pushes into a smooth as butter sequence that ends in another poised stillness.

And then suddenly it has finished - short and intimate and sweet.

**Penny** was coming down the stairs ready to start, and hesitated. Nervous she headed back up the stairs, and then turned again to make another attempt. Multiple unsuccessful attempts to get to the floor followed, each with a different hilarious approach.

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‘I’m just gonna do this – *no* – ‘I remember when I could do this easily why can’t I do it now? – I’ll try it on the side – *no* – down the banister – *no* – I’m not going to do it, I’m going home – *no* – ok *now* I’m ready – *no* – I’ll dive in backwards – *no* – I’ll just finesse it – *no*...etc.

I found it so funny because these hesitations and attempts describe so clearly what goes on for me when I am attempting what I fear – and I’m sure for others too, judging by the laughter in the room.

‘Ok I’m here!’

She finally makes it down to the floor. A hilarious journey through momentary situations and characters follows. A circus spruiker, a barfly, someone who has given up, all the characters cover their fear with bravado, wit, or other tricks and distractions. In the end she expands out to grand reflections on life – as she slips away off stage under the cover of all the noise. I wish for more opportunities like this to laugh at my hesitations and facades!

**Grace** begins in stillness whilst **Joey** moves through slow, energy filled, Tai Chi like movements. He seems to bring forth and develop internal energy. And then the focus is on Grace, surprisingly articulate and flexible shoulders, elbows, and hands moulding space and gliding through the air. Her movement reminds me of some of the sequences I enjoyed two weeks earlier in her show at Dancehouse ‘Short Dissertations on Sleep’. Also, subtle shifts and articulations at the waist. The focus is back on Joey and his speed begins to increase, turning and spinning and hopping, like a break dancer preparing for a helicopter or a head spin, but never going to the floor to do this – instead staying in, and thickening this preparation phase. Later in the piece Grace begins a fascinating exploration of breath, and the sounds of breathe – different lengths, in and out, and how it relates to her expanding and contracting body. The exploration takes her into a more dynamic and forceful expression of energy at Joey. For me, at this moment, they become a man and a woman in relationship. The man responds with a large growling out breathe – resignation? anger? The space they left for each other’s movement explorations- being still and watching the other - and slow movement to fast Aussie hip hop, are some other skilful choices that lingered. And they were both wearing very nice pairs of pants!

One of the things that I found exiting about **Jonathan’s** performance was its warm interactive nature. The audience were invited to collaborate on a choose your own adventure – vocabulary was used from computer commands, film directing and other places to guide Jonathon’s movement in an evolving group improvisation. Jonathon’s mastery of the nine base choreographed sequences enabled him to cater for the increasingly outrageous instructions with ease and humour. I’d love to see this form explored more. Also, Jonathon’s intriguing, sometimes quite pedestrian, movement sequences look like a contemporary folk dance of some sort to me – something that could be taught to larger groups of people. We need an accessible movement language that everyone can share which communicates about our experiences of this time and this place, and Jonathon’s movement sequences point in this direction for me. Jonathan’s movement was released and easeful, continuous in mood to his easy chatting with the audience throughout the piece.

Some of the audience were up dancing after the performers finished - a sure sign that the pieces inspired and roused the watchers in a full bodied kind of way. For me this Little Con performance night was a brief glimpse into ongoing explorations. I have had the pleasure of learning from, dancing with, or watching the large majority of the performers over the years, and I know that tonight was a momentary glance into long term and deep practices. For me The ‘Little Con’ is short hand for a *Little* moment in a longer *Continuity* of practice. I very much appreciate that they continue.