

From the side lines

Dianne:

It's 2010...back in the pink...

Shaun:

Paul drops into focus behind the audience, before he walks on. His gaze suddenly reaches inwards. His beginning is quiet—contemplative but finely detailed. It's the first performance for 2010—there's no need to rush...feel your way in.

Some of the gestures are familiar—a recognition after watching him dance often—but others are surprising. It's a blend that is appealing...suddenly he's on fire. After lots of different qualities and places it all coalesces into a burst of pure intention and clarity.

Ree enters and punctures Paul's space... a sharp, flurried attack. She's onto it (or perhaps keeping the demons at bay?). Her energy seems plentiful...not so tired after all. Movement pours out for a short period then the music challenges her concentration—what is this now?

Paul:

I've been reading Etchells, so I'm writing more like its theatre than dance. But I've been trying to make work, choreograph like an improvisation, so I can find space to live within it. And when I watch Ree, out there struggling, sometimes distracted, openly unsure, sometimes making a decision that seems right, that she seems happy with, sometimes one that's wrong and sometimes struggling, sometimes failing but always revealed, well then I know I've got a long way to go until my choreography is this beautifully raw.

I dunno what to say about these two (Peter and Noelle). Where I'm looking for unfamiliarity, they seem to look for something, the familiar within the unfamiliar—or is that my projection?

He's so perfectly untrained, but his gestures are marked from years of performing, and he has that storyteller's edge, even when he's in movement, it kind of looks like it's a catalyst for language, something to generate something else. A fragmented story, or fragments of words. And as I write these words they're speaking their words, their movement abandoned once the words emerge. The theatrical and the narrative taking over and fragmenting at the same time as they scramble forward muttering, talking over one another, going into melodrama we love.

Dianne:

I was returned to this sweet camaraderie—Paul's angular preposterousness, Ree's soft serendipity, but also Joey's absence as his life shifts him elsewhere (Grace is back next month). Peter and Noelle fill the gap with their particular gothic nonsense and communicative brilliance. But Shaun is the evening's facilitator, reaching out and connecting, first with (Ann-ma)Ree, then with my offer as I crash his allocated solo early. Shaun and I have over 20 years of shared dance history—he is my stage brother, the sort I trust completely and delight in wrestling with.

Ree:

Shaun enters on all fours, animal body. He searches the ground and sways in sure and solid motion. When he rises to his feet he takes his animal with him, becoming entirely human, leaving nothing behind and leaving nothing out.

His vocal and facial expressions don't tell a story, but create momentary worlds that appear in fullness and evaporate, as a string of related vignettes, without beginning or ending, flowing with total coherence.

In stark contrast to my own difficulty and uncertainty tonight, I felt instantly reassured the moment Shaun began. The outline of his moving body was sharply defined with intent and held by the space, never existing apart from the space-world in which it moved. That was Shaun's talent tonight: we never saw him, we always saw only this performance, in which he was totally present.

I can say the same about Dianne. She joined Shaun at exactly the right moment, carrying the same clarity and intention, all her own, and open to what would ensue. My excitement doubled as I watched Shaun's ability to accommodate the shifting and multiplying possibilities without any visible effort whatsoever and with absolute integrity to his solo that hadn't actually 'ended'.

The music that came in during Shaun's solo helped support the easy transition to duet. It was so satisfying watching these two artists create together. It looked effortless in the play of their skills as dancers, performers and improvisers. I've seen them dance together many times, but there was a particular freshness and sharp clarity in their work tonight.

Dianne's verbal inclusion of the word 'Private' (signed on the door at the back of the space) lent a theme to their duet: a spacious play and pondering of a word in itself and its meaning. It led to a peep show of sorts, as Shaun concealed and revealed parts of his body in stages behind the door, before leaving Dianne to solo.

Dianne addressed us with a monologue about the challenges of privacy, punctuating and rolling on with the dance, as the repetitive undertone drone of the music pledged her to stay and continue. She continued moving, she continued talking, addressing us face-on whilst cutting a retreat to the back of the space, finally turning her back on us to face the wall in silence, right on cue as the music stopped.

Right on guys, start to finish.