

# AN IMPORTANT SEED PROJECT

## [Fresh Cuts 09](#)

Choreographers include: Zhara Killeen-Chance & Alysha Firbank, Rosalie Van Orik, Josephine Searles, Justin Haiu, Mia Mason and Gina Janus

at TAPAC Theatre, Western Springs, Auckland  
From 7 Oct 2009 to 10 Oct 2009

Reviewed by Linda Ashley, 8 Oct 2009

In this collection of works from emerging choreographers, contemporary dance dominates and sometimes I wonder what else is 'out there' for us to contemplate as 'fresh'. Nevertheless, this is a very watchable hour.

**Amapolas**, Josephine Searle's duet for dancers Camile Boyte and Zahra Killen-Chance asks the question: Do we see outer beauty or what lies beneath? The accompaniment - simple clicking fingers and heels - emphasises the sinuous undulating vocabulary. The overall effect is one of exterior chic in black satin dresses, sheer black tights and heels. The impact of this dance is unfortunately diminished by some lack of execution of the balances, which need an emphatic touch, and the somewhat shrouded 'beneath'.

Another dominant feature of so much of the work this year seems to be the female gender, but this may be just the shows that I have been to. Anyway, it is good to see Justin Haiu dance in his own choreography. **Resilience** seems to be an autobiographical account from the voiceovers that we hear in the music mix (Paul Toilalo). The soundtrack and movement follow each other, lurching from strident outbursts to the more contemplative, reflective sincerity and the full-on flamboyance of street dance supremo.

It would be interesting for Haiu to work more with an outside choreographer to explore the possibilities of the relationship between accompaniment and dance, transitions and adaptation of the dramatic, to avoid the simply melodramatic. Haiu dances with true sincerity, elegance and a dynamic range that is captivating.

Zhara Killeen-Chance and Alysha Firbank are the makers and performers of **Pace**. The human condition is portrayed as having to accept compliance, dictatorship and powerlessness in everyday life whilst living in a democracy. Perhaps compromise and relativism is really what we all share, living in the elegance of a democracy. I would rather not contemplate living in a dictatorship or fascist regime.

The first part of this dance works really well in terms of the rich detailed gestural movement and the lighting enhances the duet's relationship of dictator and the powerless. The use of the metronome and voice is particularly successful. This is a work that would be worth further development and

some editing. The relationships are rich and varied in this duet and it is those sections rather than the unisons that catch the eye.

***In the Streets*** by Gina Janus captures edgy qualities of graffiti. The dancers, Monique Chapell, Alicia Chadwick-Cook, Miyako Miyazaki and Shani Dickens, have moments when they really bring to life wild, free and quirky qualities. The dancers also have a watchable involvement with each other. The accompaniment sometimes supports the dance but at other times is too overpowering. This piece is youthful and appealing, again worth further investment.

The final two pieces are, it has to be said, the strength of the collection.

***Waiting for Violet*** by Mia Mason is sensationally danced by Carlie Angel - a performer of immense charisma, finesse and technical competence: all adventure, richness, restless, fidgety and captivating. Again I ask, where are the biographies in the programme? I believe that Carlie is from Tasmania.

Closing the evening the large group piece, ***Shade*** by Rosalie van Horik and danced by Elise Chan, Anna Flaherty, Olivia Hartles, Pare Randall, Rosalie van Horik, is involving in its use of counterpoint of the rich vocabulary and atmosphere. Two dancers in particular really show this work off to the max with technical aplomb. One is probably Elise Chan and the other, I guess by the blonde hair (sorry if I'm wrong), is Rosalie van Horik. Both capture the simplicity of a full plié in first with satisfying depth and feeling.

The music selection, for me, doesn't start off well but improves as the piece continues. *Shade* brings the programme to a powerful end as the dancers evade and emerge from the shadows to create quite a sinister solidity.

As I have been watching programmes over the last few days I wonder how effectively some dancers are warming-up as there have been quite a few wobbles on and off. I enjoyed my hour with this fresh work and think there is potential here in terms of choreographers and dancers alike. This is an important seed project for New Zealand dance.