

A review of Prime Cuts

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No seriously, my feeling is that right now our dance community is desperately in need of the kind of work performed in the Prime Cuts show of this years' Tempo Festival. Big ups to the curatorial team of M.J O Reilly, Marianne Shultz and Marama Lloyd who selected a body of daring, inspiring and challenging dance works, all of which deserve longer runs and extended development.

The evening began delicately with Sefa Enari's work Fanua. This choreography was danced with sophisticated articulation by Filio Vaila'au, with composer Poulima Salima's soundtrack echoing the fusion of the modern and the traditional in contemporary Samoan dance.

Melanie Turner's work Texture evoked landscape and birdlife. Abstract movement was punctuated with environmental motifs, with digital projections folding the dancers in rich texture of light, colour and pattern, reminding me of the way light creates and recreates the movement of the forest with shadow and sun.

My heart skipped more than one beat for Anna Bate's new work Score, performed by Bate and Mariana Rinaldi. This dance felt rough, ready, confrontational and playful. From the outset this piece signalled that its audience was going to be more like a room of active witnesses (and perhaps testifiers or judges) than a safe and passive audience, to the extent that our presence as audience was cleverly choreographed into the torsion of the work. This piece had me on the edge of my seat, and really made me want to DANCE in salutation of the anti-social, the imperfect, the radiant strangeness of negotiating interactions with others.

Gabrielle Tomas's piece Hapu was another courageous work dealing with a negotiation of shifting identity – the term "heavily pregnant" couldn't apply to Thomas, who shared the incredible form of her pregnant body with lightness, almost ease. The want of utter easiness occurred in Tomas's engagement with what she describes as the 'celestial grotesque', which she describes in the programme notes as a form of physical endurance. Tomas's work begins with a film work; she is submerged in water, her pregnant body rich with movement – this state soon becomes uncomfortable – is she trapped in the water, will she surface? She eventually does, but the sense of

a disconcerting lack of control, of weight carried and of the magnificence of this weight makes this a gripping work.

Geordan Wilcox and Kristian Larsen's work re:set closed the evening. Wilcox and Larsen are wonderful performers,— as highly experienced dancers they might be considered an unlikely pair – Wilcox's forte being ballet and Larsen's being performance improvisation, but it is in the disjunction between movement vocabularies that this work sparks. The tension between Wilcox's controlled sharp lines (heightened by his wearing a pristine suit) and Larsen's idiosyncratic, organic informality (wearing a singlet) were perfectly matched. As the piece finished I must admit I was left with a desire for the partnering in the work to develop further, and this is a work that I think should be developed, which felt like it had further depths to mine.

In fact, all of works in this years Prime Cuts are well worth further development. I especially hope that Melanie Turner's Texture has a further run as I felt this was a piece that was just finding its feet, which the dancers could release themselves into still further, relax into, to really find the edges of the phrasing that Turner skilfully and rhythmically choreographs into her work.

All in all, I would say that Prime Cuts is a must-see. It's rare to see such a diverse body of choreographic ideas brought together in such a way that the works accent each other, with the singularity of each work still being supported. And a random tinsel bird person as well!!! Perfect!!