

Booking Dance Festival - Festival Showcase



Book Now

Venue Number 150. Venue150 @ EICC, 150 Morrison Street, The Exchange, EH3 8EE. 15-19 August 14:15 (1 hour 30 minutes). Suitability: U.

Thanks to the vagaries of Lothian Buses I missed the first number in this multi-company showcase of short dance items. I arrived as two tap-dancers (Hammerstep) were giving their all in a blackout with just small LED lights twinkling on the toes of their tap shoes. The music was provided by what can only be described as a mouth percussionist (Deoro) of incredible virtuosity.

Hammerstep's tap routines are like nothing you'll see in the West End, pouring a bit of Irish dancing, hip-hop and classical dance into the mix. Astaire it ain't, mighty fun it is.

This was followed with 'Character' a solo piece performed by Daniel Gwiirtzman to the classic Louis Armstrong track, 'West End Blues'. Music and movement blended perfectly. Gwiirtzman proved that the body can swing in the same way as jazz does.

Most of the first half was jazz-inflected, the second more experimental. Perhaps the most startling and novel item was Moth, by Kim Gibilisco, with projections of ultra-violet camera and Live Image Capture technology as well as dance.

Startling and innovative, and riveting to watch.

The largest ensemble is provided by the Dallas Black Dance Theatre, who close each half: a classic Alvin Ailey piece from the 80s, 'Escapades' in the first, and Christopher Huggins' 'Night Run' in the second. They are

sassy, flow beautifully and are full of energy. To quibble, when the ensemble is meant to be in unison, they fall a tad short of that pinpoint precision of movement and line which you get from the very greatest companies.

In short, this is all exhilarating stuff in a great variety of styles. Each item was greeted with whoops from a smallish audience scattered around a huge auditorium, and at the end many rose in a standing ovation. A true festival within a festival – it's a celebration of life and the body. It only runs till Sunday 19th, so catch it while you can.

[Peter Scott-Presland]