

The Edinburgh Reporter

Fringe Review: Booking Dance Festival

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by Thomas Haywood

Booking Dance Festival is a contemporary dance show featuring six different, but carefully crafted, dance acts from the USA. This is not a light-hearted show. Some of the acts will challenge your mind with their futuristic ideas, whilst others show classical dance and ballet with a contemporary twist. A lot of hard work has gone into the acts and it shows – an excellent introduction into modern dance if you have not seen this type of art before.

Rebecca Stenn's World Premier performance was calm yet moody. The lone dancer with her expressive moves accompanied by a piano was thought provoking, leaving one to wonder in a deeper sense what she is trying to express. She made full use of the large stage and was appreciated by the audience. **Hammerstep and Deoro's** World Premiere appearance shook things up by doing an energetic "Riverdance" excerpt to vocal Beatbox coming entirely from Deoro. Don't blink once those synchronized feet get moving or you will miss some of the highly entertaining moves. The use of lights on the feet in the dark whilst dancing was innovative and entertaining and the audience loved it – more please!

Daniel Gwartzman smiled throughout his performance and inter-reacted with the audience. He was light on his feet and made good use of the stage. An entertaining piece though not necessarily to the reviewer's taste.

The Dallas Black Dance Theatre are the only group in the world who have the rights to perform Alvin Ailey's "Escapades" (1973) which they did with consummate skill much to the delight of the audience. The visually stimulating contemporary dance with a ballet twist was strong and flowing and sometimes very serious. They easily were able to change moods during dances to express what they wanted to bring out of the performance.

Their finale piece done to guitar and percussion was a modern ballet full of high energy and artistic gymnastics. It was an accomplished, visually entertaining and very well synchronized between the dancers. This dance troupe certainly left the audience wanting more – certainly well worth coming to see this show for these guys alone!!

By contrast, **Kim Gibilisco's** futuristic "Moth" using multimedia and loud voices / breathing sound accompaniment left me wondering if I was in the Tate Modern. Modern Art can have a polarizing effect on people and the rest of the audience was not too sure about this either. There were definitely some innovative moves and ideas, but some of them left one a little mystified.

Claire Porter's piece was humorous, and had the audience chuckling at the way she used her voice instead of music to produce of a one-lady monologue "play". It was light-hearted and one could not help but get drawn into the piece.

This show is like an excellent Tapas of theatrical arts and it allows you to sample different ideas whilst challenging your ideas. Sadly it is not on for long so go see it before it ends on Sunday 19th August (daily 2.15pm at the EICC – venue 150).

The reviewer is a freelance Edinburgh photographer.