

# REVIEW: “Transcendence” by Nomadic Artist at Joy of Motion

**REVIEW:** Nomadic Artist’s *Transcendence* at the Jack Guidone Theater  
by Matthew Rock

A trio of dancers took the amber lit stage at The Jack Guidone Theatre, marking the start of *Transcendence*, a collaborative concert on October 1st featuring works from various company members of Nomadic Artist.

Wearing cool tones and black bottoms, the three dancers in the first piece of the evening, *Potissimum* by Carly Miks, weaved in and out of each other with curved pathways and swift lines cutting through the space. Two more dancers entered the space, one perched on the back of the other dancer, who was in a plank position. The perched dancer brought out an interesting dynamic amongst the dancers. She seemed to represent a negative force, or our inner demons, as she prowled and nimbly sleuthed around the stage, latching onto the other dancers. The dancers seemed to have a background in acrobatics, as each of them showcased their limber and agile bodies.

At moments though, some movement seemed too “tricky” and seemed to stray from the through-line of the piece. The relationships between the dancers started to become ambiguous as the “inner demon” and her partner began to take on traits of the starting trio. The relationships seemed competitive at moments and then at others more convivial. They shifted throughout in a way that seemed to create a disconnection of the piece as a whole.

The dancers exhibited strong musical skills and nuances of ensemble movement as they performed as a cohesive unit, trusting and connecting with one another.

The next piece of the evening that resonated with me was Michelle Murgia’s *Fantasma*, which started with two duets, one downstage and the other upstage, all dressed in black and performing steps that involved one partner manipulating the other. The stage was illuminated with hues of bright red. The duets seemed to continue with the idea of an inner demon or feeling that restrains you from reaching your higher self. The duets conveyed control and manipulation as one dancer in each pair was consumed by their other half, hindering them from experiencing life and reaching a higher state of being.

The journey towards a higher self and inner peace continued on as five dancers in brown bark-colored dresses with intricate patterns stood in a circle reaching towards the sky in Laura Lamp’s *Begin Again*. Each dancer descended from their reach to fall towards the ground and then would strive to get back up, reaching towards their light.

Each dancer exhibited strength and artistry as they wove amongst each other in intricate choreographical patterns involving canons, echoes, and repeating phrase work. The dancers performed sharply and in sync, all leading up to a final circular tableau of dancers in *passé relevé*. This movement delineated how achieving a level of inner peace and higher state of bliss can require a culmination of things, such as determination, strength, and balance.

Along the journey, another piece left the audience with ideas of feeling restricted by our own selves, thought processes, and limitations. Choreographed and performed by Margaret Allen, *Incastrata* reels the audience in as a single stage light begins to illuminate her body. Dressed in black shorts and top, she stood facing upstage and walked backwards downstage with her head arched back, resting on the sewn-together sleeves of her top. As the sleeves stretched, wrapped

around, and become tangled with her body, it created an interesting image combined with the rapid and agile yet restricted movement. No matter how messy things can be sometimes, or how tangled up we get in life, we must continue to move forward and problem solve to find a solution.

The transcending journey towards finding one's inner zen and happiness within continued on as an ensemble of seven dancers took the stage with orbs of light in their hands for Ashley Richardson's *just Be*. The colors of the rainbow swirled and painted the air as the orbs moved with the dancers. They followed their orbs of light and maneuvered sprightly as they began to perform individual solos that then came together as an ensemble phrase. The piece ignited the ideas of following your own light and discovering your own individual journey through life to find true happiness for the soul.

Symbolizing the journey of transcending and inner peace, *Transcendence* captivated the audience as they took us along a journey of confronting our inner darkness, exposing ourselves to be truly seen, love and peace, and finding balance. This evening of dance showed us, through balance, weight-sharing, and agile movement, that to exist beyond our physical and higher state, we must find and follow our own light.