

REVIEW: Nomadic Artist “Horizon”

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by Michelle Hayes
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On March 2, 2018, Nomadic Artist presented *Horizon* at the Fredgren Studio Theater at BalletNova, which offered a comforting and warm place to spend the evening after a cold and blustery day. The performance was made up of 10 works from various choreographers of Nomadic Artist and from throughout the DMV area. As a society, my experience has been that we are having less face-to-face interactions. This performance provided a refreshing opportunity to see 10 different perspectives of relationships that examine how we need each other in times of struggles.

“Memory Cycle” by Laura Lamp was soothing piece with a sense of familiarity. The eight dancers wearing large paisley scarves of various golds, brown, and yellow hues stood still as Michelle Murgia began moving with circular gestures as if she was mother earth bringing forces together. Her movement and physical touch with the other dancers brought them to life one by one but each dancer left shortly after beginning to move. After a duet, the cast entered the stage one by one providing an image of wind gusts coming together. The use of cannon and unison seemed to portray many individuals or individual thoughts coming together as one. It was beautiful to see eight strong women moving together to create a sense of comfort, support and warmth for each other.

“Egot” by Tariq O’Meally was a strong duet examining the relationship between time and victory and how to survive in space after a victory. The two female dancers had a captivating presence as their backs were turned to us circling their arms like a wheel turning over and over This movement became a motif for the piece. The dancers played with the rhythm, dynamic and placement of their selves with this movement, bringing me into their world.

As the work developed, their hands became a tool of empowerment. They knew they could change their world and move forward through life because of their strength in their hands. There was a moment where the dancers were face-to-face hovering their hands next to each other as if seeing where their power will take them. The most striking moments of the piece were when the dancers were intensely focused on each other though their eye contact and mirrored movements. This piece reflected for me how women are rising up and bringing their strengths to create victories.

“There You Are” was a fun and playful duet by Michelle Murgia. For me, this work resembled two sisters who were reconnecting after a long time apart. There were moments of “look at me and what I can do” as if children, moments of frustration with the other, and lots of hugs. They knew they needed each other. There was a sense of love and forgiveness through every embrace, lift and quirky finger wiggle. Movements often were in response to the rhythm of the circus-like music “Daily Routine” by Animal Collective.

The evening of *Horizon* curated by Ashley Richardson, co-founder and artistic director of Nomadic Artists, was a lovely evening that reflected human interactions and life struggles. It was a smart choice to feature other choreographers from the area, Dayo N Dance, Shelley Siller and Tariq O’Meally, as the pieces from Nomadic Artist had similar movements and emotions. The evening as a whole had an engaging variety of movement qualities. Each piece felt like a short snip-it of a statement on life and the need for human connections.