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Double Vision's 'Hysteresis' journeys to unfamiliar territory



April 12, 1:13 PM SF Dance Examiner Julie Potter











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Double Vision's Cecelia Peterson, Wendy Marinaccio, and Jennifer Mellor performing Hysteresis Photo by Rick Mellor

Double Vision's Hysteresis, performed at Dance Mission Theater this weekend, leads a meditative journey into unfamiliar alien territory. The work, choreographed by the company's Co-Artistic Director Pauline Jennings, features five female dancers moving individually with a vocabulary that includes a series of drags as elbows lead arms in figure eights, hard angles of the hips and elbows in positions that seem to get stuck and then resolve, curving bodies that settle to frame the face through parallel forearms and plenty of skittering that travels in the deep space at Dance Mission Theater. Never pedestrian and without

physical contact between dancers, the movement sequences repeat and permute, evolving against the soundscape.

The music, a score by composer and Double Vision Co-Artistic Director Sean Clute, is key to creating the unfamiliar environment with sparse percussive sounds, an electronic stasis and moments of cacaphony. The changing music colors the repeated movement phrases to express a differently nuanced encounter between the dancers each time.

The most satisfying dancing arises in trio arrangements as the technically precise dancers execute individual sequences at varied rhythms and occasionally share a brief segment, catching a rotation, a gesture, a curve, communicating momentarily before continuing alone.

Inspired by Jennings' time in Austria last winter, where she traveled for a two-month residency at Vienna's Museums Quartier, Hysteresis grew as a response to being a foreigner. In Austria, she studied a variety of physical, emotional and mental processes to bring new awareness to her work. The classes at Tanzquartier Wien in Austria included interpretations of Postmodern dance, Release Technique, Contact Improvisation, Butoh, Feldenkrais and other techniques.

Ben Coolik, whose lighting for Hysteresis is void of color to intensify the qualities, employs strong diagonals and rapid rhythmic changes. The costumes by Andrea Campbell are also without color: patchy black, white and grey bodices and black spandex shorts.

The experience of being an outsider to the dancers' landscape, stripped of human qualities, makes

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sweet the familiarity of a brief string melody that breaks through the sparse percussion midway through the work. Just before the blackout, familiar music returns in the form of a piano tune and the shuffle of people, bringing comfort.

Double Vision's next performance in the Bay Area is May 1 at CounterPulse's May Day.

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