

from the casino below as women lay mats on the floor. Young boy puts them back into a pile, and stands in a shower of blood. He is carefully wrapped in a fine mat

The juxtaposition of imagery is stark and ceremonial. An aesthetic austerity here resonates with all the liturgical solemnity of a requiem mass. And just as a congregation can be left awestruck by the sounds of Mozart or Faure, this audience was both perplexed and moved by a visual feast of imagery in which the bodies of the living are also made vessels for representing the past. But this work spoke less about the horrors of hell and the fear of damnation fumed across the pulpit by self-righteous zealots and more of the stillness and beauty in spiritual communion, and confronting our own sense of mortality while also remembering those who have gone before us.

Helen Todd, lighting designer, Ponifasio and all the Mau team travelled this production to Vienna in November where Requiem was commissioned by the New Crowned Hope Festival to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth.

Moana Nepia

The Nature of Wishing

Alyx Duncan Director
St James
Auckland

Set in this dark old theatre, the St James provided the Director Alyx Duncan with a raft of theatrical elements; complete with giant creaky door adding to her plethora of props - string of lights, steel table, toy box and suitcases. Live music using vocals and instruments supported and enhanced the atmosphere and at times drove the narrative.

Surreal, bizarre, Dickensian and somewhat burlesque, the show looked back, capturing snippets of a woman magician's life, embodied competently by Felicity Molloy Seated in front of her changing-room mirror, dreams, desires, reflections appeared and faded like memories. At one point these seem to fracture into odd angles and different sizes; we caught peculiar expressions in these dancing mirrors as the metronome ticked on.

At another point, giant white antlers became extensions of the dancers' bodies as they whipped the space. I was precariously perched on seats stacked three high, often lurching towards the front row - completely in fitting with this show - nothing was what it seemed in this world of magic.

Vaudeville characters appeared and no magician's show could be complete without someone sawn in half a dancer was dismembered, body, head and legs still moving independently. The seedy, sexual movement softened as dancers curled and entwined themselves around each other, reminding me of insect behavior.

Experienced dancers stylistically enriched the movement sections scattered throughout, giving strong performances. The disheveled stage manager, Maaka, danced a solo; from expansive movement, to momentary posing with arms out-stretched like a winged warrior, to contrasting fine circling hand gestures - a tiny

white feather drifted from his hand. At different points throughout the piece white feathers returned, forcing the audience to ponder on their symbolism.

A clever poignant twist at the final curtain revealed this theatrical world's cast and audience to be on stage. The audience was seated upstage, and looked through the performers down stage, towards a sea of aquamarine empty seats. The magic was gone and the theatre empty.

Sue Cheeseman

Tempo Round-up

Five writers give their impressions of Tempo 06

Fishnet was an inspiring, moving and powerful dance-theatre duet by veteran NZ dancers Kilda Northcott. and Lyne Pringle (Bipeds Productions) and the highlight of Tempo this year. Years of investigation created a lively, highly developed, skillfully crafted and performed deconstruction of both female stereotypes as experienced by two stunning and feisty aging dancers and a patriarchal NZ dance culture which has seen them 'invisible' and without voice for years. More importantly it reclaimed power; visibility and voice through the embodiment of women's wisdom, courage, integrity, intelligence and sexuality. Though subversive in content it was delivered in such cleverly constructed and inviting theatrical ways that it completely charmed its audience, entertained them and often moved them to tears.



In *No Added Sugar; Transit* by Rachel Atkinson cleverly strung together a series of solos, duets and group sequences of movement co-constructed by the dancers with a focus on questioning internal/external transition and female repression. With a strong cast all unique in presence and movement, evocative lighting by Sean Curham and powerful sound score by Charlotte Rose, it gently deconstructed meaning and struggle by presenting isolated and conflicting individuals engaging with each other and token props - signs of empty containment, all with intriguing questions around hope to discover truth, ever hidden, ephemeral, fleeting, inside transition. *Women and Honour* by Clare Luiten was a brave, evocative solo starkly and darkly interweaving different media to express personal and universal issues imbued in intimate relationships around manipulation, guilt, honesty and freedom. Each image presented was highly considered, clear, beautiful and haunting within slow, internal and increasingly dynamic twisting movements, projected photographs of herself naked in contortionist positions in an empty pool, pre-recorded confessional texts by another female voice and aided by a stunning sound

score by Charlotte Rose.

Alexa Wilson

Tempo 2006 will be remembered, if not for its virtuosic performances, for its diversity. Three diametrically opposed evenings of dance presented by *Rapa Dance Collective*, *The World Dance Showcase and Company Z Dance*, highlighted the spectrum of dance that is present in Auckland 365 days a year.

Rapa Dance Collective is comprised of dance majors from Te Wanango o Aotearoa, under the direction of Moss Patterson. Their programme at TAPAC showcased a range of works from the students in addition to a new work-in-progress, *Te Whenua*, from Patterson. Jimmy Ngapera's *Mocean*, demonstrated a choreographic sophistication which bodes well for future work from this young, raw talent. The ensemble proved their stamina and commitment

by appearing in every work, and all were performed with utmost honesty and verve.

Company Z Dance presented an altogether different type of dancing over two nights. Though it too featured young performers, the choreography was by elder statesmen and women; the respected English choreographer Siobhan Davies, our own Mary Jane O'Reilly and expatriate Timothy Gordon. Gordon's career with iconic European choreographers such as Maurice Bejart and William Forsythe is evident in his use of classical ballet vocabulary mixed with floor work and flexible upper backs. Company dancer Benny Ord was awarded the inaugural Peoples Choice Award for Best Male Dancer

However; the performance which proved most popular with audiences was *The World Dance Showcase*. In less than two hours we were transported, via inspirational dancing, from Aotearoa and the Pacific region (*Rapa* again), to Argentina, India, Turkey, China, and Guinea. An uplifting and eye opening trip.

Marianne Shultz

Backlit Productions (formerly known as *In Flight Productions*) succeeded in presenting *Fuzzy Reception*, a highly professional triple bill and short film, for Tempo this year This was acknowledged with the Spirit of the Festival Award going to this tight-knit bunch of fresh graduates.

The show was "Unitec" in style but it is clear that *Backlit* are no longer students. They have all clearly matured as performers and choreographers and also as costume designers. Contemporary dance is difficult to costume thematically and performance-wise, but *Backlit* created appropriate costumes that were works of art in their own right.

The show opened with the cheeky and playful *Threads* by Georgie Goater and Tracey Purcell. This was followed by Janine Parke's dark and highly charged *Shift*. Anabel Harrison's short film was imaginative and quirky which at first glance was light relief but dark warnings simmered just below the surface. The show ended ironically with an up-beat piece *DANCE-mart* by Colette Arnold. It was a light-humoured look at how the company members work days in low-paid jobs in order to pursue their dance careers.

It is difficult to work as a collective but *Backlit* are proving that they are serious about attacking this challenge head on. *Fuzzy Reception* was an