



OTUS, Company Oliveira & Bachtler, Riverfront, Newport

December 2, 2016
by Mike Smith

OTUS is a chic, elegant and also funny circus-dance-theatre performance, filled with grace and charm but with eye brow raising wow elements and also gentle relationship exploration.

For the UK debut the venue was very tight, a small audience seated in a lined along the wall in the Riverfront Studio, with virtually all the space needed for the performance which moves from walking across a sort of tightrope on the floor (composed of small blocks of wood – think dominoes), juggling in different places, gorgeous aerial dance and climbing on to piles of these blocks of wood. In theatres it will have a different feel, less up close and personal but possibly more of a stage performance.

This show includes witty duets that combined flowing dance moves from Sage Bachtler Cushman and perhaps more acrobatic moves from Hugo Oliveira. They form something of a straight man and comic couple at times with the choreography being physical interaction interweaving juggling, lithe dance body lines and elements of slapstick, particularly from Hugo. The two performers devised and now perform the show which lasts just under an hour.





There are elements of this show that you now get from the big physical circus skills companies that are keen to show off their artistic credentials, such as NoFitState from where Sage and Hugo have developed their own company. But often in the large performances there is so much movement of audience, so many big props, scaffolding, sopping and starting that an over arching theme or atmosphere is lost. Here the show does flow from section to section to give that cohesion, helped enormously by the audience not being herded around a space and in my case usually distracted by the mechanics of the work rather than artistry.

Sergio Vilela's lighting is also crucial to this performance as the varying spaces designed by Bruno Capucho for individual performance has to be created purely visually and the choice of music from Deaf Center, Erik K Skodvin, Nina Simone (particularly lovely), Otto Totland and Svarte Greiner were perfect for the waves of differing movement and emotion.

OTUS was commissioned by Coreo Cymru, Chapter's Creative Producer for Dance, as part of its development commission work and this show is also an excellent success from Wales Millennium Centre's Incubation Programme - showing that the faith in making the transposition of circus artists into theatre and dance artists environments can produce scintillating results.

The show is at Theatr Brycheiniog at 7.30pm Saturday, December 3 with a workshop at 4pm and then in Liverpool at Black-E, December 7 & 8, before returning to Wales for a performance at The Dance House, Wales Millennium Centre on Saturday, December 10.

www.theatrbrycheiniog.co.uk

www.theblack-e.co.uk

www.wmc.org.uk

Images:

J Pedro Martins and Ashleigh Georgiou

<http://www.asiw.co.uk/my-own-words/sage-bachtler-cushman-otus-takes-circus-theatre-new-heights>

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