

Three Weeks ★★★★★

12th August 2008

Titillating even before the show starts, the four pairs of legs with disembodied voices canoodling boisterously before us are like foreplay to the main event. Sold as a "dreamy ballad of sexual dependency" DOT504's work is raw and visceral, and while overtly sexual at times, it remains sexy and sensual. Dancers are carried with a swift caress until they hook, flex and hurl themselves into an athletic airborne flight of dangerous orchestrated beauty. At times violent and challenging, the series of scenes and dances contain magic, humour and gravity. As the company conveys the weight of touch and pressure of connection, sometimes gentle, but more often heavy, they grasp onto bodies in motion and hold tight. It's an exhilarating ride.

Author: Susannah Radford

Edinburgh Fringe Report

9th August 2008

DOT504 are the first fully professional contemporary company in the Czech Republic. Working the same seam as Scottish Dance Theatre or Rambert, they fuse classical technique with a modern experimentation, examining the erotic philosophy in this belligerent, yet lyrical, ballad of sexual dependency. Another example of dance's preoccupation with sexual and romantic relationships- and an affirmation of the pas de deux as an integral aspect of contemporary performance- *Holdin' Fast* revolves around three couples' conflicts and intimacies.

Unafraid to stop the dance for lengthy spoken meditations on the logic of relationships, and swapping partners with the liberalism of a sixties commune, the dancers are, by turns, both violent and sensuous. Playful teasing switches to brutal assaults, characters bounce and collide and explicit writhing gradually slides towards gentle intimacy. They work around the dangers and pleasures of passion, demonstrating how seduction and fighting are entwined in an alluring horror. DOT504 reflect the European fascination with the boundaries of dance, frequently interspersing the action with conversation or lectures while taking real physical risks.

Yet they never lose sight of their precision and quality of movement, making this an equal treat for the balletomanes and performance art crowd. It is heady stuff, suggesting that love relationships are darker and harsher than we would like, and that the desperate desire for intimacy is constantly thwarted, perhaps by the parallel desire for social status. By the end, the dancers are crawling beneath carpets, as if trying to escape the audience to enacting their passions beyond our gaze. *Holdin' Fast* is passionate and provocative, rich in both theatrical skill and emotional content.

Author: Gareth Vile

The Scotsman ★★★

8th August 2008

This enjoyable show from DOT504, the Czech Republic's only professional contemporary dance company, is by turns sensual, playful and rather bewildering. The piece seems to fall into two camps – avant-garde physical theatre and expressive contemporary dance – with varying degrees of success. The moments of tender partner work are sensuous and poignant, as the dancers find countless different ways to lift and hold each other in the shadowy light. A soft piano and gentle whispers build a real sense of intimacy on stage. Less effective are the balloon bursting, intestine-eating segments which, although diverting, detract from the choreography and its often beautiful execution.

Author: Kelly Apter

The List ★★★★★

7th August 2008

The mathematics of sexuality

As we file into the UK debut by the Czech Republic's only professional contemporary dance company, we're confronted by the body of a young man, draped over a blackboard covered in mathematical equations. Upstage, under a half-raised curtain, running sets of legs, whoops and cheers suggest the heightened sexuality of teenagers at an illicit house party. It's a nice juxtaposition for a work that tries to find logic in sexual attraction. Three male and three female dancers, each playing a distinct character, enact the multiple possibilities of sexual relationships. There are skits – a cheeky attempt to explain the possible outcomes of a threesome using maths, a very literal sex kitten invading the audience – and there are moments of visual beauty. The writhing dancers travel, serpentine and horizontal across the floor, coupling and recoupling, while petting and eroticised play becomes violent, constrictive mauling and the private agonies of those spurned.

Author: Kirstin Innes

Fringe Review ★★★★★

6th August 2008

This is a beautiful work that lingers in the mind long after its over. Review Holdin Fast is part of czech republic @ the fringe. Created by Jozef Fucek and Linda Kapetanea of RootlessRoot and performed by the dancers of DOT504 this is the kind of show that Aurora Nova might have picked up a couple of years ago. It's a "dance theatre" performance that works in any language. As we file into the auditorium we are greeted with a bare stage. On one side a figure lies draped over a blackboard. Through a gap in the rear curtain we glimpse the barelegs of the dancers fooling around back stage. Low whispers of laughter float across the stage. It's a nice touch and characteristic of an intelligent use of minimum props and staging. Take 2 blackboards, 2 rugs, a microphone, some chalk and glitter.. Oh and 6 extraordinary athletes. Dreamy is about right. We are lulled gradually into the piece, snippets of drama, dance and text choreographed to a sound track by Ivan Acher that is at times haunting, aggressive, playful, tender. I don't go to see much dance so I don't know how this piece compares with other dancework. As theatre it is fabulous. Freed from the constraints of a narrative, images and metaphors arise spontaneously from the dancers interactions- the carresses of love, the push and pull of a growing relationship, the dynamics of the love triangle, the sex kitten, the suffocation of a relationship you can't escape. There is nothing heavy or pretentious here though. The work has a humour and a lightness of touch that doesn't take itself too seriously- except when it needs too. There are some laugh out loud moments. My favourite bits were the bouncing woman, the slapping competition, and the equations of love but everyone will have their own. I also really liked the text based scenes- addressed to the audience they are an opportunity for us to connect with the performers and build some empathy. The individual performances are all strong but the stage really comes alive in the set pieces with all 6 dancers. There were so many moments full of grace and style, so many moments where you just think "How did they do that!?" I had a couple of grumbles. Some of the text could have been delivered with more clarity and I think a bit more practise with the microphone would help. I was also annoyed that the venue let people in after the show had started. Doesn't usually bother me but in this case it did. This is a beautiful work that lingers in the mind long after its over. It's poetic, funny and sexy and gets 5 stars.

Author: Robin Manuell