

N.Y. Theater Buying Guide

Review: *barrish* by the A.O. Movement Collective

by Sue Salko

The tensions and complexities of open and unabashed mixed-gender sensuality poured over us during the performance of 'barrish', a remarkable piece that defiantly embraces established boundaries only to tear them apart, defying roles and our own societally-driven assumptions .

The evening opened with five women and two men supporting mattresses which buttressed the dormant form of a woman (is she sleeping? is she dead or alive?) The dancer, Leah Ives, who will shortly mesmerize us with the powerful elegance of her body in motion, is very much alive!

She was soon joined by Lille De, Anna Adams Stark and Emily Skillings, all riveting performers whose explosive energy combined with Ives to both startle and amuse us as they enacted snatches of a TV police drama with allusions (both vocal and physical) to the psychodrama of life threatening moments of 'criminal intent'.

And, that was just for starters!

The space was carefully lit by lighting designer Edward Rice to add both soft intimacy and sharp focus while Jonah Rosneberg's score, performed by him, Concetta Abbate, and Lisa Dowling added further texture to the performance.

Director Sarah Rosner's stream-of-consciousness choreography magically took the audience on an intoxicating and evolving voyage of intensity. Our senses were captured and swept along a movement path ranging from Diana the Huntress to Dionysius, the estatic, amidst echoes of Lady Liberty/Joan of Arc, and back to shades of Monty Python. There were moments of fierce tenderness, trust, and intimations of dependence in the performers' shifting roles, which often appeared as counterpoints to the entrances and exits of a steady procession of agile young artist-performers (we counted sixteen) sharing space in the silently unfolding drama.

'barrish' closed on a frolicking version of a family day in the country, extreme coupling notwithstanding, danced with great abandon by the entire company. At this final juncture of the evening's compelling journey we felt that we had been offered a special glimpse of daring: Sarah Rosner's truthful and fearless exploration of who and what we are within a rapidly morphing world.

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A.O. Movement Collective at HERE
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For more information: www.the AOMC.org