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# DANCE EUROPE



GHOST LIGHT  
IN HAMBURG

FROM BERLIN  
WITH LOVE

IANA SALENKO  
PATRICIA BARKER  
ERICO MONTES  
AURÉLIEN SCANNELLA

DEBUTS IN MUNICH  
SWAN LAKE

**CRITICS' CHOICE**





as part of Edinburgh International Festival's *My Light Shines On*. © Mihaela Bodlovic.

forethought that Whitley was on about - who'd have thunk that choreographers up to this point hadn't been planning their work in advance?

A newly filmed revival of Helen Pickett's neoclassical *Trace* is up next, a yearning duet with a lovingly emotional intent which is beautifully danced by Rimbaud Patron and Claire Souet amidst the magical spell of a Rachmaninov prelude. Like Pickett's piece, Sophie Laplane's *Oxymore* was commissioned for the 2013 edition of the Edinburgh Festival and equally updated this year. Another duet, it features two women performing chains of short, punchy movements in what looks like the props room of an opera company. It's gorgeously lit and, although the choreography does get a little repetitive, there are some intriguing shapes and ideas in there.

Following on from that are two works originally created for Scottish Ballet's 2019 Digital Season. Myles Thatcher's *Frontiers* is shot beneath a flyover and features snazzy flickering intercuts that do little to disguise the lack of ingenuity in the choreography.

Laplane's *Idle Eyes* includes some dancers from Scottish Ballet's Youth Exchange Programme; it has a vaguely clubby atmosphere and a weirdly prescient closing moment when one of the dancers sneezes and everyone else runs away. Did Laplane know something we didn't?

The big finale, certainly in terms of scale, is the world premiere of *Catalyst* by Nicholas Shoesmith. Performed on the stage of Edinburgh's empty Festival Theatre, it opens with one dancer and ends with dozens. It's very Crystal Pite in its sense of organic spectacle, and the addition of the dancers' facemasks gives everyone a robotic appearance. It's a nice way to finish the show, and in these isolated times it's wonderful to see so many dancers all performing on the same stage at the same time.

Gerard Davis

### **WE ARE NATURE THE LAST FRONTIER, GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN**

After six months of seeing no live performance, I finally had the opportunity to experience dance in the flesh at a venue close to home. While I've lived in Greenpoint, a north Brooklyn neighbourhood, for almost a decade, I hadn't crossed the work of formidable community member Sol Kjøk, a Norwegian visual artist and organiser. Kjøk, I soon learned, presents art of various mediums under the moniker of NOoSPHERE Arts with Daniela Holban. Together with Georgia Osborne and Nicole Von Arx of CreateART, the artist set out to co-produce the inaugural series *WE ARE NATURE*.

The platform, kicking off during Climate Week 2020, takes place at The Last Frontier. The aptly named venue, housed in the Broadway Stages building where Kjøk is also artist-in-residence, is practically on the Brooklyn-Queens border. As I make the trek away from the neighbourhood's bustling thoroughfare and into the warehouse district, a nip in the air signals that fall is upon us. Mother Nature's reminder that change is around the corner also illuminates the omnipresent feeling of uncertainty. But alas, I push the feeling aside, excited at the prospect of finally seeing dance in a format other than my computer.

Going to an outdoor performance in New York in midst of Covid-19 is a production in and of itself. *WE ARE NATURE* attendees are required to wear masks, get their temperature taken, answer a health questionnaire and stand in designated spots six feet



WE ARE NATURE - Dance Installation with Kelly Ashton Todd and Christiaan van Voorst van Beest. © Effy Grey

apart. After going through the series of procedures - all efficiently executed by volunteers - the group is escorted up iron stairs to the building's impressive roof replete with Kingsland Wildflowers' fecund gardens and views of the Manhattan skyline.

Once we've assembled on our individual electric blue X's taped on the ground, dancer and choreographer Kelly Ashton Todd and bassist Christiaan van Voorst van Beest appear below us on a lower rooftop. Todd, looking like a disciple of Pina Bausch, in a taupe nightgown, gathers branches to form a nest while the musician plays on. The two artists, who both are members of the immersive theatre show *Sleep No More*, are in constant synchronicity even as Todd traverses far from her counterpart. Inspired by bird migration, the work has a cyclical structure with Todd beginning and

ending in a curled cat-like position.

Exploring the far-flung areas of the roof, the dancer grabs branches like a feral animal crawling in the shadows. Her shoulder blades glide off her spine. Working her way to the roof's edge, Todd perches herself like an egret. She nimbly etches her wispy limbs into the skyline behind her. Van Voorst van Beest responds to the precarious moment with hollowing, guttural sounds, as if they're coming from deep inside of his instrument. Eventually, Todd makes her way to the large, shallow puddles in the middle of the roof. Again, Bausch comes to mind, particularly her works *Vollmond* and *Arien*. Todd traipses through the water like a child in a kiddie pool, soaking herself - hair and all - to the bone.

While the work conjures the natural world, it effectively collides with the very entities that threaten it. Industrial plants hum

and whirl not too far away. Two giant bulbous structures ominously blink fluorescent green and red lights at The Newton Creek Water Treatment Plant. Cars honk as they careen down the nearby highway. Their cacophony interrupts the bassist's mellifluous sounds. The tension of these two worlds, coupled with the crises that the planet is facing, underscores just how much everything is hanging in the balance.

Bookending the evening are poignant offerings by performers Sparrowhawk and Lady Kabbaz who weave ritual, audience participation and movement into a beautiful meditation on community. *WE ARE NATURE* reminds viewers to come back to ourselves and bodies in an effort to find connection with one another and the world around us.

Trina Mannino