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Milieu 2016 Frontier Danceland – Review

written by Ezekiel Oliveira | November 19, 2016



Milieu 2016 choreographed by Low Mei Yoke, artistic director of Frontier Danceland, proposes a new choreography reflecting on the past 25 years, the present and an uncertain future for the dance company.

Frontier Danceland has been going through changes since [the departure of former rehearsal director](#) and company dancers, and the vision for Milieu 2016 seems different from the format in which the ensemble usually presents performances.

Milieu 2016 looks back into its past, expanding the cast into senior dancers and company friends coming on stage to symbolise a passage of time, relinquishing the past while Mei Yoke, firmly stands in the middle of the stage anchoring the choreography while the dancers travel slowly across the stage.

The proposition here is attractive; though, older and even retired dancers have a distinct presence on stage. However, the ensemble moulds itself into a slow moving unison, dissipating in the darkness of the stage leaving one wanting to see further.

The music composition mainly overscores the dance for the first half of the performance and the curiosity is rarely fulfilled, mainly because of the lighting design – insisting in keeping the dancers in the darkness for the majority of the time not letting one see what the choreography truly is.

As the choreography evolves, the music takes a background position allowing the dancers to explore their outstanding performance skills further in the simple composition of the dance.

Milieu 2016 comprises three different sections. The second one is a video of the dancers performing in the desert with beautifully and detailed gestural material. In here, two dancers come together to share weight, sweat and even tears, set against the purity of the dunes – it's wonderfully dramatic but it doesn't seem to belong to the rest of the evening.

Is it perhaps an entire different artwork?

Following the video, the main cast conquers the stage with unprecedented precision and determination leading the audience through a myriad of partnering work such as duets and trios, juxtaposed against the unparalleled performances of [Adele Goh](#) and [Joy Wang](#).

Milieu 2016 strikes me as a copy and paste collage of dance material; the dancers deliver a terrific performance throughout, but they too look in need of new choreographic challenges.



Milieu 2016 by Frontier Danceland at SOTA Drama Theatre 18th and 19th of November.

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