
INFINITE MOVEMENT EVER EVOLVING PREMIERES TWO EXCELLENT PERFORMANCES

August 19, 2011

By Molly Glentzer *The Houston Chronicle*

You know it when you experience a rare moment in theater. That's how I felt Thursday as Infinite Movement Ever Evolving premiered Maurice Causey's *Grim Eye*.

This is a jewel of a company with top-notch project-to-project dancers (including some borrowed from Houston Ballet and Complexions); it's a treat to see them perform in an intimate space where you can watch their ribs rise and fall with their breathing and capture the nuances of facial expressions.

Grim Eye feels like the kind of ballet Ridley Scott would make if he created dance instead of movies. Maybe it was the fierce, angry, survivalist movement with jazz hands as claws — *Alien*. Or the strobe lighting and warrior paint on the eight riveting dancers — a little *Blade Runner*. Or Gabriel Prokofiev's vinyl-meets-classical music. Probably all of the above.

Causey's choreography shows William Forsythe influences (he was an early member of Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt company) without mimicry. Both grimy and gorgeous — and ablaze with sharp balletic touches — *Grim Eye* mixes electrifying solos, duets and small groupings with ensemble sections that have a dynamic, collective energy.

Grim Eye could hold up in a much larger space, where you might look down on the moving architecture — the kind of magic that happens when the four men are leaping and lunging more or less in place, and the women swiftly skip out in a wide swoop around them. If only I could hit replay and see the whole thing again.

Superfluous, by iMEE founders Spencer Gavin Hering and Andrea Dawn Shelley, opens the show on an entertaining note. Suave, sexy and just a tad loopy, it plays up the dark edges of '50s songs by Harry Belafonte, Elvis Presley and Patsy Cline. It evokes a slightly dreamy bar, maybe in the Caribbean, where the air is full of boy-girl tension as the locals play poker, smoke and drink heavily. (A sculptural tree and an apple also suggest some Adam and Eve business.)

The fine dancers included tall, mesmerizing Britt Juleen Gonzalez (recently of Dresden SemperOper Ballet), Houston Ballet's Jessica Collado and Oliver Halkowich, Edgar Anido of Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Lindsey McGill, Cristian Laverde Koenig, Shelley and Hering. Don't miss this one.



All About Dancing: iMEE Arrives

August 23, 2011

By Nancy Wozny *Dance Source Houston Writings*

Don't let iMEE's weird name throw you off, this is a company on the move on Houston's dance-scape. iMEE stands for "Infinite Movement Ever Evolving;" I can't vouch for the infinite, but it's a "hell yeah" on the "movement" and "evolving," which were in full evidence for their recent [Houston Dance Festival](#) show at Barnevelder.

The program opened with *Superfluous*, a light romp set to 1950s tunes, jointly choreographed by iMEE co-founders Spencer Gavin Hering and Andrea Dawn Shelley. The pair are well known to Houston audiences for their work with Dominic Walsh Dance Theater and more recently, Hope Stone Dance. But here, they are standing on their own as relatively new choreographers. Hering and Shelley showed off a theatrical bent in their first outing, creating a sense of community, while the dancers enacted a collection of soulful songs evoking the spirited tenor of the 1950s. Oliver Halkowich and Shelley possessed a luscious quality in the sensuous opening passage, capturing the wistful nature of nostalgia. Jessica Collado stood out for her finely honed attack alternating with a silken quality. I could have stood for a bit less drunk dancing, yet the choreographers showed a knack for narrative, musicality, and bringing out the best qualities of their dancers.

[Maurice Causey](#) changed the mood completely with *Grim Eye*, his raw edged apocalyptic opus, set to an electronic score by Gabriel Prokofiev. Causey's heavy metal ballet begins and ends with the volume cranked up to full. I guess that's the point, but it does get a bit heavy-handed and monotonous. Although I never quite understood why or how we got to this bitter place, *Grim Eye* did indeed keep my eyes busy with plenty of dynamic movement sharply executed by this fantastic group of dancers. Clad in white pants and black war paint, Causey conjures a tribal essence, sinister in its relentlessness. Jeremy Choate's lighting design added to the piece's harsh landscape.

The dancing proved to be the most impressive element to the evening.

Shelley, Hering, Lindsey McGill, Britt Juleen, Cristian Laverde Koenig, Halkowich, Collado, Edgar Anido—terrific dancers all—made up for any discrepancies in the choreography. What a pleasure to see such distinguished guest artists, Houston Ballet dancers, and local dancers sharing the stage. Good move iMEE.

One thing is perfectly clear, iMEE has arrived on a solid note. Your next chance to see them is during Dance Source Houston's annual [Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance](#) at Miller Outdoor Theatre on September 23 & 24. That's not a plug, it's a strong suggestion.

Nancy Wozny, reviews editor at DSH, is a contributing editor at Dance Magazine and covers the arts at [Culturemap](#). She was a 2011 Scholar in residence at [Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival](#) and she blogs at [Dancehunter](#).

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Grim Eye for the New Guy

August 27, 2011

By Theodore Bale *ArtsJournalblogs*

Infinite Movement Ever Evolving's recent premiere of Maurice Causey's *Grim Eye* made me feel like I was in 1990s Berlin. In particular, I thought of a Depeche Mode record party I attended one December night in a smoke-filled warehouse in Kreuzberg. This is not to suggest that either iMEE or Causey are in any way old-fashioned. On the contrary, when young people in Houston want to see a ballet embodying their lifestyle and emotional concerns, it's likely they go to see iMEE.

While many dance critics of my generation are stuck lamenting over the demise of Balanchine and Stravinsky, I continue to focus on a more recent and equally important legacy: William Forsythe's protégés. More and more of his former dancers are returning from Europe to present their work in America, and Causey is a striking choreographic voice among them. The simple fact that he is in Houston working with the glamorous young dancers of iMEE is a sure indicator of the healthiness of the dance scene here. It is difficult to label Causey as an American choreographer, even if he comes from Alabama. His work and activities, from what little I know about him, are largely based in Europe and seem to be developing in terms of a more European dance aesthetic, just like that of his mentor.

I don't know exactly why football players wear black stripes of greasepaint under their eyes. A friend who follows football told me that it has to do with reducing glare in the sun, and that it also gives the appearance of a second set of eyes, which might distract an opponent on the field. In either case, the same greasepaint stripes seem apt in Causey's dance within the context of Jeremy Choate's bright fluorescent light boxes. When the dancers eventually face upstage, they have stripes smeared on their shoulders as well, giving them the appearance of two-faced warriors.

Perhaps Causey's choice of music by Gabriel Prokofiev (grand-son of the legendary Sergei) for *Grim Eye* evoked, for me, the mood of mid-90s

Depeche Mode. I am always a little irritated when a choreographer does not choose to name a particular score in program notes, as was the case here, but I speculate it was in fact Prokofiev's *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra*. The music has such an insistent pulse and is so deeply layered that at times it becomes almost arrhythmic. A variety of taped sounds mingle with a symphony orchestra and are well-organized into various "chunks" or sections, which Causey acknowledges skillfully in his choreographic phrasing.

As an idea, *Grim Eye* is some sort of proving ground. Soloists emerge for long phrases during which the other dancers stand and watch as if judging. There are large, powerful unison sections for the ensemble that result in spectacle. A highly stylized and recurring walk often makes it seem as if the dancers are trying to step over something dangerous, like landmines or claw traps. It is certainly a ballet, depending on a versatile classically-trained body to realize a collective *épaulement*, or unified body direction that keeps shifting either in confrontation with, or retreat from, the viewer.

One of Choate's light boxes flickers insistently while the other burns bright and insistent. It's an incident that anyone who has ever worked in a crappy office building could recognize as familiarly irritating. There is an entire narrative just in the arrangement and juxtaposition of those two light boxes, as if they are incompatible but stuck-together lovers. Their "quarrel" seems to affect the movement of the group dancing underneath them.

A wood-and-string, tree-like structure with two red apples graced the stage for the other premiere on the bill, Andrea Dawn Shelley and Spencer Gavin Hering's *Superfluous*, which is set to an assortment of iconic American songs from the 1950s. Though the dance began with an overt reference to Adam and Eve being expelled from paradise, the narrative continued along a different thread, perhaps inspired by the lyrics of Harry Belafonte's rendition of *Angelina*:

"I've heard the bawdy tunes I've been in honky-tonk saloons I took my liquor by the vat Well I stayed on call for a rousing brawl Home was where I hung my hat."

Consequently, in one passage a woman performs a swooning solo while holding a big red bottle of liquor. In another, the men engage in a drinking game at an upstage bar only to mimic vomiting in pails shortly thereafter. The compelling dancer Edgar Anido tries to finish his solo while wearing

one red high-heeled pump, but he seems too drunk to control the phrases. It doesn't appear that anybody can hold his or her liquor, which is most definitely coming directly "from the vat." It's a desperate, fleeting world. Compared with Prokofiev's vast score in *Grim Eye*, however, the limitations of the shorter popular melodies (Patsy Cline's *Crazy*, Elvis Presley's *Love Me Tender*, et al.) are evident, and as a result the dance doesn't finish so much as it wanes.

Why Do Fools Fall in Love? plays along as the women undress to their white slips, the men to their bleached white wife-beaters and knit boxers. They are an attractive, sensual group of people, but there is something perfectly sexless about the episode, as if it has been spruced up for a family audience. It's difficult to sense whether the irony is comic, tragic, or merely situational as the lyrics roll on, "Love is a losing game, love can be ashamed."

A Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance

September 25, 2009

By Toba Singer *Dance Source Houston Writings*

Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park

Review for Spencer Gavin Hering's, "Dichotomy"

Other works on the evening's program draw inspiration from more traditional dance forms. A standout is "Dichotomy" by Spencer Gavin Hering to *Opera* composed by Emmanuel Santaromana, danced by Paola Georgudis and Lindsey McGill. Georgudis is a Chilean dancer who was a founding member of Dominic Walsh Dance Theater and McGill has danced with several contemporary companies since graduating from Houston Ballet Academy under Ben Stevenson. Wearing white pants and black tops, their dichotomy is founded in sculptured poses abandoned in favor of sudden directional shifts and recoil movements that send equal and opposite waves through their bodies just a beat behind the tempo.

Toba Singer is a San Francisco Bay Area-based writer who contributes to Dance Europe and Dance Magazine. She is the author of "First Position: a Century of Ballet Artists" (Praeger 2007) and is working on the forthcoming book "Fernando Alonso: the Art and Science of Ballet" (University Press of Florida 2011)

16th Annual Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance

September 24, 2010

By Theodore Bale *Dance Source Houston Writings*

Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park

Review for Andrea Dawn Shelley's, "Unbeknownst"

Andrea Dawn Shelley's idiosyncratic "Unbeknownst" for [infinite Movement Ever Evolving](#) (iMEE) took us quickly back to The Houston School with its weighty, distraught paraphrase of the second act of Petipa's "Swan Lake."

George Balanchine often liked working with five dancers at once, and here Shelley has achieved density and power through an extreme deconstruction that could intrigue even the master of 20th century ballet. Jeremy Choate's brilliant lighting design seems to frame the quintet in a seeming twilight of classicism that is at once forward-looking. I heard Tchaikovsky's tired violin solo anew, which is no small feat.

Theodore Bale is a critic, journalist and musician in Houston. His writing has appeared in The Boston Herald, The Cambridge Chronicle, Dance Magazine, Dance International, Contact Quarterly, Dance Chronicle, Houston Press, Houston Chronicle, Art Lies, CultureMap, and other publications.

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