60x60

Carole Edrich enjoys 60 dance-filled minutes, twice



Sixty different choreographies danced by 60 different dancers or troupes to 60 new musical compositions in 60 jam-packed minutes. This European premiere, hosted by the extraordinarily inventive organisation East London Dance, opened with Robert Voisey relating a little of the history of the event before he started a huge timer at the very front of stage left.

You'd have thought that such a challenging concept might have been launched by a dancer or choreographer, but this is not the case. Voisey is a composer who specialises in electro-acoustic and chamber music and founded an organisation called Vox Novus in 2000 to promote the music of contemporary American composers.

He started the *60x60* series in 2003 at which time it was simply a showcase for new contemporary musicians. Then in 2007 it was combined with dance. The format has been very successful, attracting record audience numbers in 17 performances throughout the US and Canada.

Voisey explained: "A minute can be ample time to express a whole gamut of imaginative sounds, or it can be a constraint that forces an artist to isolate what is the most important element of a work."

The same is apparently true of dance. Some pieces were enticing, some, intoxicating and some were downright strange. The majority of pieces were contemporary dance; the most memorable depicted a group who picnicked oblivious to the frenetic gyrations of a dancer representing the threat of armed conflict.

Other performances included a couple dancing salsa to chamber music, an extraordinarily flexible gymnast, a dance performed by BMX rider and a sad and serious pole dancer. Three tall youths with blank Pierrot masks (*pictured left*) performed a perfectly synchronised rollerblade break dance and a group of five younger kids brought the house down with energetic street dance that included head spins and hands-free cartwheels.

This whirlwind experience left me energised, amazed and amused – and in awe of those responsible for stage managing and coordinating it. I didn't want to blink in case I missed something grand and since it wasn't possible to take it all in at one go, I went back to watch it a second time. I can think of no higher accolade.



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