

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Brian Mengini

Dance, But Make It “Trashion”

by Kat J. Sullivan

It wasn't until I was sitting on the toilet at Franky Bradley's, peeing, that I noticed them screeching. “Shit,” I blurted out, knowing I was the only one who tried to sneak in a bathroom trip despite the announcement that the show would be starting shortly. Now, cursing myself and my dogged need to hydrate, I was privy to the cast of *Dumpster Dance for Garbage People's* pre-show vocal warm up.

Willing myself to pee faster as the shrieks were punctuated with bids of “Good show! Good show!” was a weird experience. In the spirit of the performance, I'll be upfront. The evening only got weirder from there.

It was curious to me that Prudence Anne Amsden, the choreographer, called the piece “a void.” In some ways, there was indeed a sense of nothingness; the progression of the work did not follow a traditional arc, instead presenting a series of ideas that tromped and traipsed along without any larger goal or climax. (This wasn't a bad thing; it was particularly reminiscent of Annie Wilson's 2015 Fringe [Loveritis](#).) We jumped from a languid drag queen instructing us to place tips in the bin provided by a silent figure wearing a baby mask to two peevish gremlins belting out the chorus to Nelly Furtado's famous “[I'm Like A Bird](#)” with images of bird flocks projected onto the background.

In other ways, too, it could not have been more full of sensory input; while two dancers in glittery leggings and socks with tuber-like tails made out of stockings high-kicked and collapsed to the ground, laughing and crying and fake-vomiting, the gremlins in green unitards and shocking-pink wigs hurled obscenities and insults at them (“I should have killed myself tonight instead of coming to see this!”) while rolling themselves around in roving makeshift trash bins. Later, Kate Bush's cult hit “[Running Up That Hill](#)” blared. A video clip played of a dumpster floating down a street on top of flood waters, flames edited to appear exploding out of its innards, while Amsden, in a unicorn mask, jacks off her own horn.

It was weird. And funny. And, oddly, a little sad. Amsden didn't withhold the fact that the piece, her recycled MFA thesis, grew at least somewhat out of her struggles with mental health. Sometimes it was [campy](#): more than once, performers would laugh their asses off only to collapse into sobs. Sometimes, a bit subtler. I laughed at Amsden's opening song, welcoming us into her void and apologizing to us that we ended up here, though I felt a little weird doing it.

[*Dumpster Dance for Garbage People*](#), Prudence Anne Amsden, Franky Bradley's, 2019 Fringe Festival, September 10-11.

By Kat J. Sullivan
September 12, 2019