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Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Megan Bridge

Crazy Love Letters; Beautiful Break-ups

by Megan Bridge

On April 29 at FringeArts, thirteen audience members gathered after Tania Isaac's performance *crazy beautiful* with thINKingDANCE writers for one of our signature "Write Back Atcha" writing workshops. We collectively created a vocabulary list (petrichor (n): a pleasant smell that frequently accompanies the first rain after a long period of warm, dry weather). We shared our questions for the artist (who was not present). Conceived in response to the prompt, "Write a love letter or a break-up letter to this evening's performance,*" the workshop participants' reflections are compiled below.

crazy beautiful….

I want to thank you for inviting me in. For deciding to be vulnerable and sharing with me your specific logics. I picture you suspended above the ground. Frozen in extension, stretching to defy something inevitable—gravity—death—falling in love with you. Your quick-tongued movements and slow deliberate language. I have a habit of adopting my love's languages. I'm sorry—no, I hope you don't mind—if you catch me sneaking into the shapes you make.

&> Eppchez!

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

You speak the language of written words, my mother tongue; spoken words, my second language; visual engagement, a language I can

understand but not speak; community, a language I have studied all these 50-odd years. And you speak the language of wordless motion, which I do not speak. It's me, not you. Maybe our paths will cross again, when I have learned more and know enough to be able to love you and love all your languages with the passion you deserve, the passion you shared with me tonight.

-ZH

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

As I watched you move from start to finish, a well-spring of emotion gripped my being, I felt the weight you were trying to carry and I wanted to help. As I watched you move with purpose, and then hide in fear, I wanted to comfort you and let you know I am afraid too. When you picked yourself up and pushed forward, stood tall and strong, and felt the rush of this task of existence, I wanted to champion you. But then I saw how tired you are of the same everyday, and felt the same in my soul, watched you find mad joy in the in-between. And I think I need to find my own.

Be well,

Zach Zecha

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

I'm breaking up with you because it's all too much. I don't want to break up, because it feels lacking in generosity and you have been so very generous... but I'm not sure that you need me. You have a lot going on—distant murmurations framing a parallax that splinters my consciousness. Still—I embrace the petrichor.

-Patricia Graham

(vocabulary compiled from workshop participants)

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

I love your stuff, your wild abandonment. I felt for the first time that every seat was a perfect seat. You made my heart weep and I don't know if I'll ever understand.

-Sheila Zagar

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

This is one of those Victorian calling cards. Maybe we could court one another for a bit. I was moved. My emotional brain understood what was going on better than my logical brain, which is pretty typical. I felt your rawness. I felt connected to the artist without having to understand her life in particular. I understand pressure, anxiety to conform, the desperation for connection and the simultaneous fear ofit and the push and pull of the creative process—needing desperately to communicate with the other and exposing yourself to rejection,or worse, being misunderstood.

-Veronica Cianfrano

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

I love you. As I overstimulate my stagnant mind with unanswerable questions of a future and a past you only ask of me the question of what it means to be in the present. How agony is not a look forward to pain passed, or backwards when pain was less, but a raw example of an authentic self.

Love,

Zach Gruber

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

Thank you for transporting me into a sacred space from the recesses of your mind. You showed me something new today and I am grateful. I was confused but still entranced.

Forever intrigued,

Kristen Bashore

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

At this moment in time I feel exasperated. I was paralyzed by your web of tension and pain. Then heated and overwhelmed with your chaos. I want to take a step back and think about this from afar. I'll keep the memory of your design and petrichor close. My breath feels locked in this room and my heart aches. Maybe we can both take a breather and come together again another time.

<3 Alicia Crosby

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

Thank you. Thank you for transporting me. I felt thoroughly immersed in an inside-out world of crinkly experience and found myself able to connect deeply to your sentiments even without fully grasping them. Thank you for reaching me. Moments when the artist lay on her bed considering the ephemeral nature of thoughts preceding sleep resonated deeply with my own process. Finally, crazy beautiful,thank you for moving me. Witnessing the fluidity of the performer's physicality while a soundscape of scattered considerations washedover the space allowed me to participate with you kinesthetically.

Love,

Cindy Paul

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

I love you, but we are too much the same. We need to find lovers who do not grind their faces into pillows. Lovers who do not find it so difficult to get out of bed, even when they are crawling out of their own skin. It was lovely to see myself in you, but let us both seek the smell of fresh dirt after a rain. I hope to see you again some day. Thank you for what we shared.

Yours,

Francesca Montanile

Dear *crazy beautiful,*

Your pain is ever-present. I want to console you and ask you who hurt you. I feel like you conveyed such a raw and beautiful portrait of the human experience in an intense physical performance. Your interpretation of life, death, pain and rebirth moved me.

Love,

Timothy O'Donnell

Dear Tania,

I understand you now much more than ever. You and I suffer together, in our own ways. The show makes me want to spend even more time with you and Aaron the girls. I feel insanity/genius are on different sides of the same coin. I love you.

Love,

Adam Lee Brown

*The love letter or break-up letter concept is credited to artblog's Matt Kalasky, a guest leader at one of our first "Write Back Atcha" events in fall 2015.

crazy beautiful, Tania Isaac, FringeArts, April 27-29, 2017.

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