

The Future Project: Sunday Will Come

Andy Alabran, KQED Arts, Oct 24, 2009

I'm getting old(er). I can tell. The signs are all around me: my hair is thinning, I'm noticing more deaths, births, and weddings, and I prefer naps over going out for drinks. The Intersection for the Arts' current show: The Future Project: Sunday Will Come shines the light on mortality and humanity. I was ready for a theatrical take on existentialism. So I went.

This is the first time Sean San Jose and Erika Chong Shuch, of Campo Santo and the ESP Project respectively, are performing onstage together. Separately, they are vibrant movers and shakers in the Bay Area. When I heard they were combining their creative forces, I had to witness the alchemy. And the result is pure gold. This hour-long theatrical and dance performance is, at times, heart-wrenching, at other times, playful, and at all times, engaging. Denizen Kane adds live soulful singing and plays guitar throughout.

Before the show began, I took in the set. A row of rocks, rubble, and concrete slabs lined each side of the black box theater to create a square for the playing space. The entire upstage wall was transformed into a large textured slab. I wondered what the desired effect was: the side of a mountain? the Wailing Wall? Prehistoric cave? Post-apocalyptic landscape?

A series of vignettes, punctuated by blackouts, tell a non-linear story of one couple's existence and place in the universe. One scene played out physically and silently (San Jose flopping his limp and heavy hand on the table as Chong Shuch repeatedly tries to bring life into it.) Another was a lighthearted game of one-up-manship where the couple comes up with new ways to die. Another scene: the somber decision-making process of how to kill a sick goldfish. I was awe-struck during a tragicomic display of grief as Erika threw herself around the stage with great physical stamina. A scene or two later, I laughed when she reappeared as the goldfish to sing a 30 second jingle.

It was during the blackouts that I had time to think about my own place in the world. I thought about my family and my relationship with my parents. They're getting old(er), too. I thought about how quickly my time on this planet can sometimes feel. I thought about that little goldfish and how we all are just tiny fishies on this big blue spinning orb. And I cried. None of it would have moved me as much if it weren't for the chemistry between the three performers (Denizen takes stage at times). None of it would have worked if Erika and Sean didn't wear their hearts on their sleeves and perform with a kind of raw expressivity. It does, however, work. It works very well.

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