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June 16-22, 2005

DANCE

## Of Hippies and Bugs

Headlong's *Mixed Tape for a Bad Year* departed from the company's recent works like *Hotel Pool* or *Britney's Inferno*, two full-length productions with considerable technical challenges. Instead, *Mixed Tape* was an uncomplicated, low-tech affair: eight pieces wrought with quirky twists and dark humor. "Yonder," done to disquieting Depression-era folk songs, juxtaposed notions of romance with actions that lead to murder. "Hippie Elegy," a melancholy duet between Amy Smith and Jeb Kreager, lamented the loss of idealism brought on by an increasingly unkind world.

Such bleakness was balanced by humorous selections, including the zany "Swinginging," built on the simple premise of three women dressed like baby dolls standing in a line swinging their arms and hips up, down and all around. The trio finds itself in a constant battle to stay in synch as each dancer also strives to assert individuality in their gestures. But the show's biggest hit was "Attachment 2." Nichole Canuso and Niki Cousineau gamely pulled off a tightly coordinated dance while also dealing with their real-life kids. With the women dancing while carrying babies in slings on their chests, the piece was a laugh-out-loud enjoyment.  
--Deni Kasrel


Cerebral and serene, Niki Cousineau's solo dance meditation "Somewhere Close to Now" spun a web of timelessness across the stage. Using simple movement repetitions, often just a flickering hand, Cousineau blended into and out of surreal videos created by her Subcircle collaborator (and husband) Jorge Cousineau. Dalí-esque video lured her into forests or sent her tumbling into uninhabited digital cityscapes. Poetic background text from Alan Lightman's novel *Einstein's Dreams* reflected on the incongruities and possibilities of the unknown quantity we call time. Perhaps "Somewhere" was a bit too long, but it's possible this was the intention.

Laura Peterson Choreography's "Security" was perfectly enchanting. Four performers dressed like bugs (red- and black-striped legs and arms, and ruffled rear ends) executed Busby Berkeley-style formations, scurrying around the stage on all fours. Behind them, surveillance cameras projected the bugs in bleak corridors and empty spaces. Onstage, the bugs twitched their ruffles at each other and crawled about in chorus line patterns. The French pop background music further enhanced the divine silliness of it all. Surveillance may be bad, but *vive* the bugs.

And *vive* nEW Festival, which challenged, amused and proved itself worthy — the separate bills on the same night, and the previews of coming attractions were innovations for other producers to emulate.

--Janet Anderson

**Headlong Dance Theater June 10 Subcircle/ Laura Peterson Choreography June 10 nEW Festival, The Arts Bank**

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