

DANCE REVIEW

Starr Foster Dance Project

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WHO: Starr Foster Dance Project

AT: art6 Gallery, 6 E. Broad Street

WHEN: May 7, 2005

TICKETS: \$8

INFO: (804) 343-0250

Sometimes good things really do come in small packages. In the case of the Starr Foster Dance Projects recent presentation of “Camera Works,” small refers to the length of the program (60 minutes) and the major prop in the opening work, “Experiment in a Bag.”

“Experiment in a Bag” puts six female dancers in a stretchy white fabric bag that at various times throughout the dance provides security and generates alarm. Straining their hands, faces, and other body parts against the fabric, the dancers suggest the extremes of a Martha Graham-esque Greek tragedy or an Orwellian science fiction.

A video collage of the dancers from their point of view—inside the bag. When the video images are reversed, or shown as negatives, the images appear almost fetal. The bag, which takes on the persona of a living, breathing organism, draws in one of the dancers from outside—enticing her, drawing on her curiosity, and at one point grabbing her. At the end, the bag spits her out—unfit, not tasty enough, or perhaps just all used up.

The video work is by Douglas Hayes and the music, by Atom Heart, Tetsu Inoue and Bill Laswell, sounds like an embellished visceral heartbeat.

“Seven Sisters,” is a beautiful touching work that deals with grief, mourning, and resolution. Based on an actual tragedy, the dance was performed outside at Pocohontas State Park and filmed by Douglas Hayes. (Details of the extraordinary incidents surrounding the actual filming were covered by Cynthia Wren in the May 1 *Flair* section of this paper.) Dressed in white lingerie-type dresses, the six women hold hands and support one another as they give in to their grief, slipping and sliding in the waters of a clod stream. Choreographer Starr Foster’s young daughter, Grace Herndon, is the seventh, missing sister. Dressed in white with angel wings attached to her back, she plays in the stream and sets a symbolic white feather afloat downstream to her mournful siblings.

Foster’s “Heroin(e) *Section 2*” is a work in progress that features an abundance of contact. The six women dancers sit on, stand on, and hold on to one another in the most improbable ways as their movements juxtapose violence (heroine use, the sound of gunshots) and caring. The work is set to premiere in October.

Like the other works on the program, it features the video collage of Douglas Hayes. This time Foster’s interesting and eclectic musical choices include a number of selections ranging from Neil Diamond to the lyrics of Tom Jones’ “What’s New Pussycat?”

Foster packed an amazing amount of art into a solid 60 minutes—including one 10-minute intermission. The tiny art6 Gallery space was packed, and if the applause was any indication of the quality of the program, then this little gem of a production was a grand success by all accounts.

Approx. 500 words or 12 column inches