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Casebolt and smith: Speaking Out!

by [Phillip Andrew Bennett Low](#) | 8/4/09 • I was on the West Bank with an open slot, and I found myself drawn to [this one](#): I'd seen a preview of their work at the Out-of-Towner's showcase, and it had stuck in my head sufficiently for me to check them out further.

Their opening dance was simply and elegantly done, and lovely to look at; though I'll confess there was a part of my brain going *Ah. Whole show is going to be like this. Okay*, and struggling to adjust to the slightly higher level of concentration that an hour of dance was going to require.

Their next two dances — and the meat of the show — were a different matter entirely: more like comedy sketches, told through and punctuated by dance. Both relied heavily on spoken-word, which tends to be a great deal more literal than movement. The second piece described the first meeting of a pair of dancers — it's not clear whether these are intended to be them or a pair of fictional characters, and it hardly matters either way. We see what seems to be an interaction over a great period of time summarized through a series of hilariously non-sequitur conversations, and much fun is to be had from the contrast between their elegant, sweeping movements and their awkward, mumbling delivery. Their movements also shift between dance and everyday gesture, which produces a lot of fairly hilarious moments in and of itself, my favorite being a series of graceful and intimate duets which culminate in the two of them leaning in to give each other an uncomfortable tent-pole hug.

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The third piece is equally entertaining — a rehearsal, again between a pair of dancers, this time growing progressively more sexually invasive with their proposals and creating progressively more ludicrous and technical rationalizations.

The fourth, concluding piece was impressive — it consisted entirely of the two of them seated at a table, and the extraordinary amount of movement that they're able to develop using only the upper half of their bodies. I found it a bit startling after how literal the two preceding pieces were, and it took me a while to adjust again to a piece that was purely told through movement. I wonder if I would have felt differently if they had been organized differently — perhaps alternating between spoken and silent sequences, as opposed to sandwiched the way that they were.

All of the pieces were enjoyable, although I personally found the crowd-pleasing ones in the center to be most appealing. They hit such a wide range of styles that I spent a good chunk of the show being disoriented.

Phillip Andrew Bennett Low (maximumverbosityonline@gmail.com) is a playwright and poet, storyteller and mime, theater critic and libertarian activist, who lurks ominously in the desert wilds of St. Louis Park, feasting upon the hygienically-prepared flesh of the once-living. His main claim to fame is probably as co-founder of the Rockstar Storytellers, and as founder/producer of Maximum Verbosity, a garage-band-like theater troupe that is in a state of constantly re-defining itself.

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