



CASEBOLT & SMITH - BORN ENTERTAINERS AND SKILLED MOVERS IN O(H) AT THE ACTOR'S COMPANY THEATRE

By Kelly Hargraves
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I turned gay watching Joel Smith dance the other day. No really, I did! I couldn't stop watching Joel's half-naked, perspiring body dance. His partner Liz Casebolt had warned me (in song, no less) that if I stared too long I would "turn gay" and I did it anyway!

Despite her clever, knowing way of anticipating what a helpless audience member like me would do, and the musical warning, I did it anyway! I bet I wasn't the only one, either.

It's that type of knowing anticipation that permeates the entire performance of *O(h)*, the new work the charmingly wise and wry duo Casebolt & Smith has housed in the cozy Actors Company Theatre for the next 5 weeks. Both the sexy Smith and the clever Casebolt *KNOW* what you expect; know what you're going to watch; and know what you're going to ask about it.

O(h) begins with their spoken list of what they won't do, (high kicks just because they can; audible breath; grasping at the air for emotions); what the term 'contemporary' supposedly means; who "owns" movements and who needs permission to do them?, and self-reflexive questions about "am I doing this right?", "do I do it this way", and the ultimate "what does it all mean?"

There is one "dance only" section, accompanied not by their dialogue but by a spoken word soundtrack describing the "Amen break" and its appropriation. It's telling that while watching this moment of "pure movement" you do ask yourself all the same questions: Where did they get that move? Why did they put it together? Why are they dancing? What does it mean? These born entertainers and skilled movers believe in "happy endings" so they finish the program with a (perhaps) improvised section that demonstrates, a perhaps ironic, creative process.

O(h) is a program built more on questions, and observations, than on giving answers. Maybe that's because they are both college dance professors and have likely asked and been asked every question there is about the art of dance. Perhaps including "why dance at all?"

This very question was posed and answered by many of the dancer's featured in Wim Wender's film *PINA in 3D*. It's an interesting time to see both in theatres and answer it for oneself.

O(h)

Written and Performed by casebolt and smith (Liz Casebolt and Joel Smith)
Scenic Design by Predock_Frane Architects

Performances: January 13 through February 19:

Fridays @ 8 pm: Jan. 20; 27; Feb. 3, 10, 17

Saturdays @ 8 pm: Jan. 14, 21, 28; Feb. 4, 11, 18

Sundays @ 5 pm: Jan. 15, 22, 29; Feb. 5, 12, 19

Photos by Jeff Larson courtesy of the production