

TWIN CITIES METRO

FRINGE OUT-OF-TOWNERS & WHAT TO SEE TONIGHT

By BILL STITELER 8/05/10 12:52 PM



The Out-of-Towners (not the crummy movie)

There's very little middle ground, I find, when it comes to the Out-of-Town shows. I'll either going to see something that will change my whole perception of theater, like The Cody Rivers Show or The Pumpkin Pie Show (PRO TIP: name your company "The (blank)(blank) Show to get a good review! Guaranteed!), or you'll see something so godawful I imagine that they're here because they were run out of their hometown just ahead of the pitchforks and torches, banjo "gitaway" music in the background.

It was different this year. There was a lot of "okay" in the Out-of-Towners' Showcase. A lot of "possibles."

And then Casebolt and Smith took to the stage.

I didn't see their show last year, because it was dance, and I don't get dance. By which I mean, "I don't get why this is entertaining to other people." I understand the skill--I mean, I understand how hard dance is; I took three semesters of it and my skill level could be tactfully described as "running 50,000 volts through a frozen chicken." But I still do not understand the grammar of most dance shows. It's too abstract, and the abstract belongs to the Holy, whereas I am very much in the Rough camp.

Go ahead and thumb through that copy of The Empty Space. I'll wait.

Where was I? Oh, yes. Casebolt and Smith. The show's title is O(h), which is pretty rotten ("Seen anything good?" "Oh." "Oh what?" "Oh!" "Oh what!?" "OH! OH! OH!" "Are you having an orgasm?" "Third base!") but the first sentence of their show description is "If you're sick of modern dance that takes itself way too seriously, this dance show is perfect for you," which could only be improved by changing it to "If you're sick of modern dance that takes itself way too seriously, this dance show is perfect for you, Bill Stiteler. Pie will be served during the performance."

Second, they have killer buzz. I've been hearing nothing but "Casebolt and Smith" from everyone I know every time Out-of-Towners have come up.

And third, they fucking tore the house down at the OOT showcase, with what was a very simple presentation starting a quiet moment of the two dancers sharing a microphone and explaining how their bodies were worn out, moving into basic dance steps, which then built into a riotous moment of "turning everyone gay" through dance. Short trip at the Fringe, but still.

The ideas are accessible, but not dumbed down. From both what I've seen and had described to me, they are breaking the grammar of dance down to basic elements and then building it back up, taking the audience along with them, building the Rough into something Holy which makes it into... (short essay question, 15 pts, support your thesis).