



Mobile | About us | Photos | Videos | Subscriptions | RSS Feeds | Today's Paper | Classifieds | Contact Us

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

TUESDAY, 12 JUL 2011
02:19 PM Beirut time

WEATHER
Beirut
29 °C

BLOM INDEX
1,320.2

News Business Opinion Sports Culture Technology Entertainment
Music Art Performance Film Lifestyle Books Travel & Tourism

Follow us: DailyStarLeb Like us: Me gusta 1,539 37 Search The Daily Star... Advanced Search

Performance

A futuristic fusion of dance, sound and light

April 30, 2011 01:26 AM
By Matthew Mosley
The Daily Star



BEIRUT: Proponents of futurism, the Italian art movement of the early 20th century, churned out almost as many manifestos as they did artworks.

Filippo Marinetti, futurism's founding father, particularly loved a manifesto. He composed dogmatic tracts on everything from painting to pottery to poetry.

Marinetti even felt inclined to stipulate a new form of dance. In his "Manifesto of the Futurist Dance" of 1917, Marinetti scorns "emotional expression" and "aerial ardor" in favor of "anti-gracious, asymmetric, synthetic [and] dynamic" movement.

For Marinetti, the purpose of dance is to prepare for the forthcoming fusion of man with machine.

"One must imitate the movements of machines with gestures," he writes, "pay assiduous court to steering wheels, ordinary wheels, pistons, thereby preparing the fusion of man with machine, to achieve the metallicity of futurist dance."

Marinetti advocates rigid gestures and a complete lack of emotion as the most appropriate style of movement.

Unsurprisingly, Marinetti's terpsichorean vision never achieved the kind of world domination he envisioned. However Thursday evening Beirut audiences were treated to a dance performance that Marinetti may have approved of.

Toolbox



4

Like

0

0

Share

More from Matthew Mosley

Not to shock, nor arouse, but to titillate

Art meets experimental psychology in stance

Supernatural Tetras and moon frogs

A constellation of Beirut's beauty

Beirut survives Spider Galaxies

Stony figures compelled to dance

The future is bright, but dystopian

The wild relief of dance mania victims

Dancing the body to its physical limits

MOST POPULAR

VIEWED SEARCHED E-MAILED

1. Arsenal sign forward Gervinho from Lille
2. Only timing, trigger unknown in next Hezbollah-Israel war
3. Sleiman warns Israel against plundering reserves
4. Lebanon determined to defend maritime resources: Sleiman
5. Assad loyalists storm US, French embassies in Syria
6. Cyprus defence minister quits over base blast: state media

Advertisement

Russian Art

Vail Fine Art Family of Galleries Museum Quality Fine Art

www.vailfineart.com

Fine Art Giclee Printing

on Canvas Watercolour & Matte paper High quality personal service

www.TheDotFoundry.co.uk

Love Street Dance 3D?

Street Dance Camp 2010 - Birmingham Residential. Learn the latest moves

www.letmedance.co.uk/

Farrow Fine Art Gallery

Tribal & Ethnographic Art Authentic Antique Art for Sale

www.FarrowFineArt.com

STAY CONNECTED



MULTIMEDIA

IMAGES

VIDEO

Pictures of the Day - The Making of a New Queen, Miss Lebanon 2011 Part II

"Catexis," created by dancer Muriel Romero and composer Pablo Palacio, felt a little like a dance from Marinetti's envisioned future, in concept if not in execution. Thanks to the Instituto Cervantes, "Catexis" appeared at Masrah al-Madina as part of the Beirut International Platform of Dance.

Using sophisticated motion-tracking technology, Romero and Palacio presented a performance in which sound became an extension of bodily movement. As Romero shifted her limbs, Palacio's sound system responded, sending sonic ripples around eight speakers stationed throughout the auditorium.

The performance began with an extended blackout, which seemed at first like a technical failing but later transpired to be a leitmotif of the show.

All of a sudden, a tight spotlight picked out Romero's face, a set-up reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's monologue "Not I." Frozen on the spot, Romero manically mouthed "Pow, pow, pow," as regular as a pre-programmed automaton. Plosive sounds ricocheted throughout the auditorium, giving voice to Romero's silent lips.

When the lights went up, Romero sallied forth with sequences of callisthenic movement. A former dancer with the William Forsythe Company, her technical prowess was exploited to the full as she folded, whirled, lunged and kicked with tireless precision.

Like a folkloric deity, Romero was able to command the hubbub of Palacio's sound design. Whirling her arms, she intensified an electronic hum that sounded like a horde of wasps, bringing it to an ear-splitting crescendo with the vigorous circling of her limbs.

Sometimes it was less clear how the sound design was linked to Romero's movement. Strings of nonsense syllables ("fa, fo, fu, fi") seemed to come out of nowhere, or a squelchy beat appeared, not obviously linked to Romero's choreography.

An eccentric lighting design added to the avant-garde air of "Catexis." Spotlights kindled and extinguished erratically across the stage, not always illuminating Romero's gyrations. One beam periodically picked out an unfortunate audience member, whose squinting discomfort became an element of the performance.

The audience was regularly plunged into moments of darkness. Then a bar of light would appear on stage, at one point illuminating only the dancer's wobbling legs, accompanied by a machine-gun like barrage of consonants.

The creative team brought an agreeable levity to their technological investigations. There was wit to Romero's choreography, a playful blend of classical gestures with robotic motion.

Sometimes she took on the fanciful precision of a mime artiste, passing a hand across her face to reveal a deranged grin or stretching an imaginary thread between her hands.

There were exclamation points, too, in Palacio's sound design. Integrating sampled speech with wobbly synths, hissings and electronic belches, the eight channels of Palacio's system merged and separated in a medley that sounded like a 1960s sci-fi soundtrack gone haywire.

The century since Marinetti's manifestos has thankfully proved far more artistically varied than he predicted. Nonetheless, it's pleasing to witness the sensibility of avant-garde visionaries channeled into a performance that, with its progressive use of technology, can claim to be genuinely futuristic.

BIPOD bows out on April 30 with an appearance from Switzerland's Gilles Jobin Company. For more, visit www.maqamat.org/bipod2011 or call 01-343-834.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on April 30, 2011, on page 16.

Taking on the divine monster's mantle

View all

Advertisement



ATENCIÓN

DESCUENTO ADICIONAL

ATENCIÓN

mediterranean
INSTITUTO DE CALA MISTRERANO



Yara Khoury-Mikhael was a heavenly vision at the lavish beauty Pageant at Beirut Souks before and after she was crowned Miss Lebanon 2011. Photos by M. Kheir/The Daily Star

View all

STAR'S COLUMNISTS



RAMÍ G. KHOURI

True sovereignty is what Arabs are after



MICHAEL YOUNG

Najib Mikati, our own dead man walking



DAVID IGNATIUS

Under David Petraeus a smaller CIA may work better



KENNY LAURIE

Argentina running out of time to meet lofty expectations

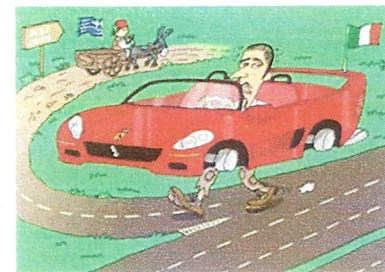
View all

Looking for a job

Check

THE DAILY STAR Classifieds

EDITORIAL CARTOONS



TODAY'S PAPER