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Dublin Dance Festival 2016 'Fulcrum' has that je ne sais quoi

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Jenny Ecke and Dylan Quinn in Fulcrum by Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre
Mark Stedman

Fulcrum by Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre

Rating: ★★★★★

Inspired by Beckett's play "Catastrophe" the critically acclaimed "Fulcrum," by the Enniskillen based Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre, explores the nature of power, dependency and co-dependency. First performed in 2014 and touring both at home and internationally since, "Fulcrum" sees dancers Dylan Quinn and Jenny Ecke square off in a battle for power and dominance. In many respects this forty-five-minute masterpiece is a show that really shouldn't work as well as it does. And yet. And yet.

With "Fulcrum" there's a Beckett like minimalism and sustained intensity throughout. Initially Quinn dictates proceedings, with Ecke seeking escape and release from Quinn's overbearing control. But this duet is all about balance and tipping points, circles and shifts, with each as much sinning

as sinned against. Soon the balance shifts and “Fulcrum’s” power play hits its most memorable as Ecke begins to dominate in a more visceral contest with a worn down Quinn. In the end a kind of uneasy resolution is achieved, though whether in a state of resignation or reconciliation seems deliberately unclear.

From a certain perspective it could be argued that “Fulcrum” risks being laboured and self-serious, a dance in slow motion that limits its own interpretive and performative possibilities. Two sequences in which Quinn painstakingly raises his arms above his head and later lowers them are almost a bridge too far, bordering on tedium. A sound score by Andy Garbi is perhaps most successful with its ghostly moan, at other times sounding like standing beneath a railway bridge as a train rattles by overhead. It can all feel broody, moody and measured, and not always in a good way. And yet. And yet.

“Fulcrum’s” apparent weaknesses, its slow motion and sustained intensity, are also its most significant strengths. Rarely more than a few feet apart, Quinn and Ecke constantly engage in a focused and concentrated interplay and a subtle rhythm is achieved, all of which is set against Garbi’s excellently haunting soundscape. Together they craft some incredibly powerful images of dependency, of the need for and resistance of the other, of the terror, tenderness and violence, the longing and exhaustion at the heart of their constant power shifts and struggles. Throughout, choreographer Dylan Quinn seems content to play sidekick to collaborator Jenny Ecke. Quinn generously makes Ecke the focus of much of “Fulcrum’s” attention, and Ecke is more than up to the task, being both meticulous in execution and mesmerising to watch.

Relentless and intense, subtle yet powerful, “Fulcrum” is dark without ever being dreary, slow without ever being sluggish. “Fulcrum” may not hit many emotional highs, but that’s because it’s heading in the opposite direction, seeking out emotional depths instead. It speaks to an aspect of the human condition and does so with immense power and conviction. “Fulcrum” is felt as much as seen, and what is felt is felt deeply, and what is seen is often visually striking.

“Fulcrum” by Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre ran as part of the [Dublin Dance Festival 2016](#) at The Project Arts Centre on May 25th

For more information, visit [Dublin Dance Festival](#) or [Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre](#)



Chris O'Rourke
Theatre Examiner

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