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Dublin Dance Festival 2016 confessions of an aging dancer

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Jessica and Me by Cristiana Morganti
A Carrara

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Rating: ★★★★★

She's a soloist with the world renowned Tanztheater Wuppertal. She worked closely with Pina Bausch for almost two decades. She's a multi-lingual Italian who dislikes smoking, but still smokes with elegance when she has to. She struggles nowadays to keep her working leg elevated while trying to execute a half decent arabesque. She's currently in Dublin performing her one-woman performance, "Jessica and Me" at the Dublin Dance Festival, the first time she's performed this piece in English and outside of her native Italy. Her name is Cristiana, not Christina, Morganti. And she is utterly irresistible.

"Jessica and Me" is an honest, intelligent, comic tale about a dancer aging disgracefully whilst still consumed by a lust for life. Morganti offers glimpses of what lies beneath, of the woman behind

the dance, a woman coming to terms with her age and her body's unwillingness to comply like before. A woman stepping out into her new self, childlike, in oversized red stilettos, from beneath the shadow of a giant. As Morganti moves about the stage you hear what she thinks while she's dancing, her voice questioning every movement, every memory, every aspect of herself. Her talent, her body, her age, her history. Her self-deprecating self-doubt. And it's warm, wonderful, deeply touching and utterly hilarious.

Morganti's "Jessica and Me" employs dance, theatre and stunning visuals to charming effect in this semi confessional undertaking. Morganti's delightful tale of a dancer struggling with her breasts, her width, with the opinions of others and the legend that is Pina doesn't so much kiss and tell as hint, suggest, tease. Concealing just as much as she reveals, Morganti fades in and fades out, but the impression left on the memory is indelible. In between, she executes the moves she struggles with, laughs, cries and screams on demand, and shows tantalising glimpses through some beautifully realised sequences, such as her floor routine to an old style jazz number, of what she still has to offer as a dancer.

Morganti may spend more time warming up and less time warm these days, but the fire and the dancer inside still burn brightly. With Bausch, Morganti achieved some remarkable things. But that was then and this is now. And now she is still amazing, perhaps even more so. This year's festival treasure is charming, funny and utterly captivating, and most certainly not to be missed. I defy you not to fall at least a little bit in love with "Jessica and Me."

"Jessica and Me" by Cristiana Morganti runs as part of the Dublin Dance Festival 2016 at The Project Arts Centre until May 21st

Doors open 8.00 p.m.

Tickets: €22.00 or €18.00 concession

Post show talk Saturday 21st with Wayne Jordan

For further information, visit, [Dublin Dance Festival 2016](#)



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