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Dispatches from The Fringe - DVDs, Dogs, Hipsters and Danes

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Dublin Absolut Fringe Festival 2012

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Dogs, Straight to DVD, Hipsters We Met And Liked, Efterklang

Rating: ★★★★★

Ponydance's *Straight To DVD* is brash, brazen, bitchy and brilliant

Dance

Lest you forget why a Fringe Festival is so vital for showcasing new and innovative approaches to performance, check out *Straight To DVD* by the irrepressible Ponydance next time it comes to town. Executing the best worse dance routines ever, Ponydance deliver a hilarious hour of DIY dance that will have you holding your sides from laughing. Included in this DVD are The Dance of the Baby Buggies, The Greatest Olympic Floor Routine Ever, The Benefits of Pole Dancing and a Hip Hop Competition to end all competitions. Even their commercial break is hilarious. True, one or

two routines, like the synchronised swimming, were a little long and not as funny as they might have been. Also the transitions between some routines could have been tighter, or perhaps filled by better use of the screen. But if the occasional lull broke the spell a little, when these wildly delirious dancers took to the floor they had the audience laughing loud and applauding louder. Consistently producing innovative and inventive work, and *Straight To DVD* is no exception, Ponydance are a company so bad, they're brilliant.

For more information check out at <http://www.ponydance.com>

***** 4 stars

Dogs shows too much respect for its master

Dance

Imitation may be the highest form of flattery, but it does very little else and can often miss the point. In faithfully imitating the highly individualised Tanztheater works of the legendary Pina Bausch, *Dogs* fails to imitate her creative spirit. Proceedings got off to a positive enough start with dancers slowly emerging to a powerful percussive sound design by Bryan O'Connell, who was excellent throughout, and the striking soprano Elizabeth Woods who filled the auditorium with her stunning vocals. A dancer whispered inarticulately into the microphone and a sense of foreboding was created. In true Bausch style, repeated gestures were articulated, built upon and moved throughout the space. But it all had the feeling of having been done before, from dancers sitting in chairs right down to dancing in dirt. There was little individuality here and not enough originality in sequences that echoed Bausch too faithfully. If Bausch's Tanztheater style pushes the boundaries of what dance can be in form and execution, *Dogs* conforms to a memory of that style, even though the creator of that memory was herself a non-conformist, always looking to discover new and fresh forms of expression. There was passion here no doubt, and brief moments of beauty, and dancer Justine Cooper gave an extraordinary performance. But overall this was a lacklustre production that, despite huge investment by these talented dancers, did not rise above being a homage to earlier Bausch masterpieces.

*** 3 stars

Hipsters We Met And Liked but don't want to spend time with

Photography, Exhibition and Performance

Heads up, The Company are having friends over for drinks and you're invited. Trez hip. You'll be warmly welcomed and made comfortable amongst the rugs and candle lanterns, with some chillout playing as background while you sip vodka in a jar (Absolut, of course). They really are lovely people, Brian and Nyree, but making you watch their collection of snapshots sent from BFF's all around the world is no way near as interesting as they seem to think it is. Mind you, they do start a good story. It would be lovely if they would finish it. All that talk about Brian's Mum and Dad and about how he and Nyree met and were separated made for wonderful dinner conversation. But did they ever get together in the end or are they just friends? Starting you on a

journey only to leave you hanging mid way in, raving about photos from faraway places that are less interesting than the stories behind them, it all felt a bit too forced. It was art as fashion accessory and about half as interesting. Which is a shame, for these are far more talented artists than this lightweight offering. Make your excuses. Tell them you've booked tickets to another Fringe show and go there instead.

Hipsters We Met And Liked runs at the Samuel Beckett Theatre Sept 16th at 4.30 and 6.30, Sept 21st at 4.30 p.m. and Sept 22nd at 2.30 and 4.30. Tickets are €10.00

** 2 stars

***Efterklang* offer stillness in the chaos**

Music

In Meeting House Square on Friday night, Danish indie pop outfit *Efterklang* took a chance and played mainly unheard of tracks taken from their forthcoming album *Piramida*. It could have gone horribly wrong. But each song was deservedly awarded rapturous applause. Accompanied by The Major Lift Orchestra conducted by Matthew Coorey, these three, boyhood friends from Denmark charmed and endeared themselves even further to an already appreciative audience. With his disarmingly soft spoken manner and infectious grin, vocalist Casper Clausen gave voice to a music and a sound that felt larger, wider and incomparably deeper than the three self effacing musicians who produced it. This was only the second time these songs had been heard anywhere. With *Piramida* due for release on September 24th, it most certainly won't be the last.

For more information on tour dates and on the fascinating history behind *Efterklang's* fourth album, *Piramida*, go to <http://efterklang.net/home/>

**** 4 stars



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