
AXS ENTERTAINMENT / ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT / PERFORMING ARTS

Dispatches from The Fringe – Sweet dreams are made of this

September 11, 2013

4:47 AM MST



Bunk
PaperDolls

Bunk by PaperDolls

Rating: ★★★★★

A tall, steel frame resembling a four-poster bed stands erect in the centre of the space, draped in sheets and curtains of faded lace. A lone figure clammers and slides across ropes and bars dropping each sheet, one by one, to reveal an intricate web, like a ship's rigging set high above a mattress. Stage right, a woman sits with an old reel-to-reel tape recorder. Stage left, a solitary rope hangs suspended from the high ceiling, resting on a small pile of mattresses. All around a soundscape comprised of a pulsating, hypnotic drone and two recorded voices mixed in overlapping echoes throbs through a dimly lit twilight. So begins *Bunk*, PaperDolls breathtaking aerial circus exploring the shadowy world of dreams, nightmares, sleep and sleeplessness.

Played out within a tight, concentrated area, *Bunk's* heightened sense of power and intimacy was palpable. Throughout, its three strong, female cast displayed an astonishing array of acrobatic

virtuosity imbued with grace, power and precision. Bodies climbed, snapped, swung, tugged, kicked, wrestled and raced before collapsing in sleepless exhaustion only to rise again. Dragged silently by the hair along the floor, running frantically in the dark with scissors, chasing restless creatures illuminated by torchlights that flicker and scratch at the dark, these haunted beings swung like restless thoughts, hung like corpses or rag dolls, or hid beneath the sheet with shadows and torches in a haunting dream world between consciousness and sleep. Powerful images and half images began to emerge in the half-light, some haunting, some playful, all beautifully choreographed to perfection. The ending, as abrupt as it was unexpected, left the audience wishing it wasn't over.

In every respect *Bunk* offers a master-class in craft. The simplicity and power of its exquisite lighting design lent depth, dimension and atmosphere, as did the cleverly layered throbbing soundscape. Voice, noise and music passed through the shadows in perfect synchronization with three incredible physical performances. This wasn't just attention to detail, but to the details within the detail. Nothing was overlooked, nothing left to chance. And the end result is staggering in its power, simplicity and beauty.

Like a disturbed, restless nightmare, *Bunk* twists and tugs at the shadows, bringing forth powerful and haunting images in a flawlessly executed masterpiece. Once again, PaperDolls have surpassed their own impossibly high standards. *Bunk* is a sublime, must see tour de force.

Bunk runs at The [Project Arts Centre](#) until September 14th. Doors open at 6.15 p.m. Admission is 12 – 14 euro.



Chris O'Rourke

Tulsa Theater Examiner

© 2006-2015 AXS Digital Group LLC d/b/a Examiner.com