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Dublin Dance Festival 2015 - Four become One

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Monique Miller in *Fragments-Volume 1* by Sylvain Émard Danse
Robert Etcheverry

Fragments- Volume 1 by Sylvain Émard Danse

Rating: ★★★★★

Renowned Canadian choreographer, Sylvain Émard's *Fragments-Volume 1*, is a tetrptych of four individual dances, each distinct and unique, each informing the whole. Three solo performances and one duet explore the dancer's individual responses to their most urgent needs, deepest fears and even deeper desires. Four deeply personal and contrasting responses inform this collective in which loneliness and vulnerability are given rich expression in a powerful and often poignant production.

In the opening sequence, *Dans mon jardin*, dancer Manuel Roque lies upside down on a chair like an upturned crab. Arms and legs twist in seemingly unnatural ways as he strives to free himself. Once upright his body is possessed by a convulsive restlessness as he fills every corner of the space, running towards, or from, some deep urge or need. Attempting to stand still, his leg tremors as if possessed by a will of its own and Roque has no choice but to follow his body's incessant

need to move before coming full circle and finishing where he began.

In *Émoi, émoi*, dancer Kimberly de Jong utilises a strong, gestural vocabulary to accompany a series of detailed and perfectly executed movements. Her arms frequently beckon, her back rises and falls, tenses and releases. If Roque sees compelled, de Jong is controlled as she traverses the space. A control she struggles with, struggles to create and free herself from, a dancer caught between two conflicting spaces.

In contrast, *Absence* by veteran actress Monique Miller is steeped in quietness in what is undoubtedly the jewel in the crown of this collection. Here the body isn't compelling or controlling, rather it appears to be refusing, resisting, restricting. Age imposes limits and loneliness where even a hand has to be consciously moved and movement is always slow. Gestural language dominates, highlighting the head and heart, a motif found throughout *Fragments-Volume 1*, but particularly poignant here. In the final image of Miller, again seated, looking off into the distance in search of memory or company, the circle is completed in a profound and deeply moving performance.

The final duet, *Bicéphale*, featuring Manuel Roque and Georges-Nicolas Tremblay, felt out of character at times with the rest of *Fragments-Volume 1*. Here the individual and deeply personal gave way to the shared performance and with focus divided, individual routines lost something of their power and immediacy at times. A feeling not aided by some exquisitely executed sequences where Roque and Tremblay, physically connected, seemed to perform as a single entity. Here, in a wonderful power play for dominance, were some of the most powerful and engaging moments on the night.

In *Fragments-Volume 1*, Émard appears to give immense freedom to his dancers and what emerges are four contrasting and deeply personal performances, richly informed by a multi-layered soundtrack by Michel F. Côté and Jan Jalinec. But the hand of the master is always present, guiding, shaping and informing this intense and often moving production.

Fragments- Volume 1 by Sylvain Émard Danse ran at The Project Arts Centre as part of the [Dublin Dance Festival 2015](#)

For more information go to:

<http://www.dublindancefestival.ie/>



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