

DANCE » REVIEW

Dance around the clock

IT'S ABOUT TIME: 60 DANCES IN 60 MINUTES

Dancemakers
At Enwave Theatre
in Toronto on Wednesday

BY PAULA CITRON

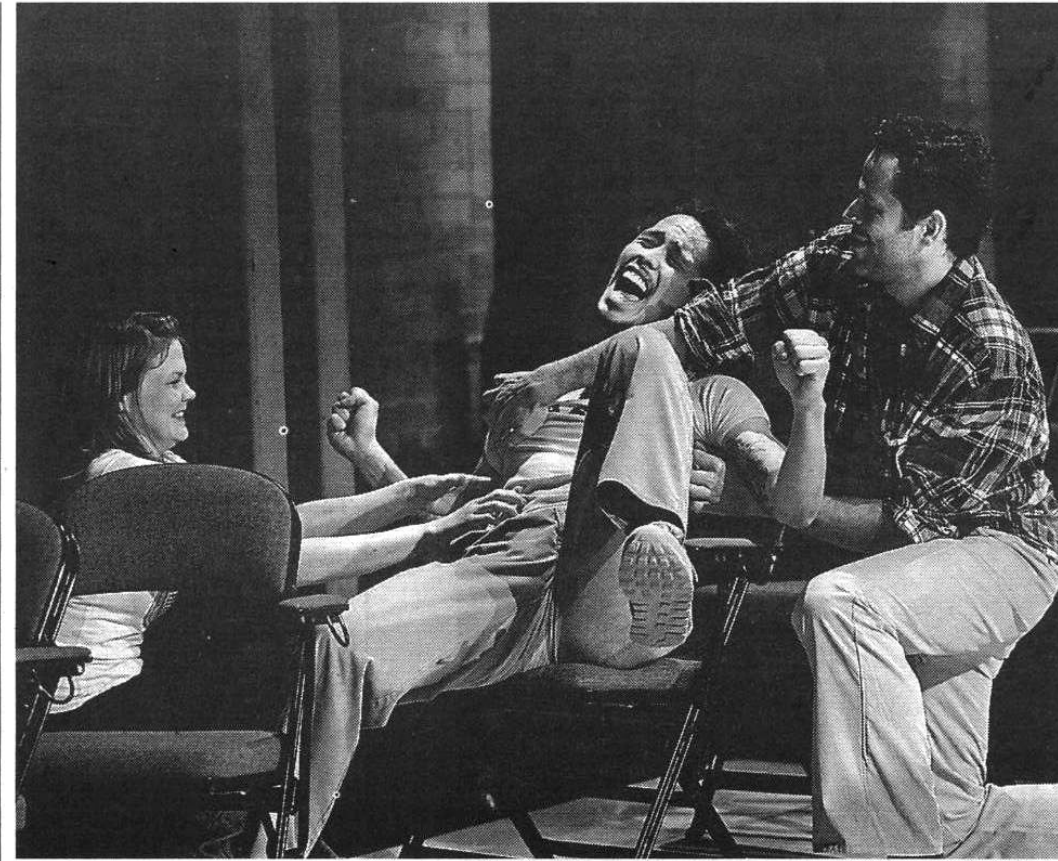
Dancemakers' latest production is sly and deliciously droll. And it definitely succeeds at challenging our perception of time. The only question: Is it dance?

Created by artistic director/choreographer Michael Trent, dramaturge Jacob Zimmer and the dancers, *It's about time: 60 dances in 60 minutes* is structured around a series of repeated vignettes – each time performed at a different length and pace.

The first go-around, the dancers must complete their actions in exactly one minute. In fact, associate director Bonnie Kim sits in the front row with a timer, and a loud beep signals when time's up. The dancers (obviously doing some silent counting) are also tracking the seconds and they hold up one hand when they think they've reached their minute.

For the most part, they're wrong. From the beginning of the piece then, the absoluteness of time is called into question.

The vignettes themselves are made up of simple actions. For example, dancers Robert Abubo, Benjamin Kamino and Steeve Paquet cover their ears so they can't hear each other counting the minute out loud. Kate Holden wraps herself around Kate Hilliard – both trying to engineer Holden's slow slide down Hilliard's body to take exactly a minute.



Kate Holden, Benjamin Kamino and Steeve Paquet: questioning the absoluteness of time. DAVID HOU

Other tasks include playing a tune on musical instruments, setting out folding chairs, putting on and taking off clothes, tickling a fellow dancer, carrying containers filled with water, running and then hurling their bodies across the floor, jumping up and down, and reciting a recipe for shepherd's pie. There is even one minute when the stage is completely empty.

And it's not just the dancers' sense of time that's being tested here: For the audience, the uncomfortable minute when the silent stage is empty of performers seems endless, while Holden's slide

down Hilliard's body seems shorter than a minute because it's so humorous.

One could call these one-minute sequences setting the theme. Then come the variations: completing the same tasks in half a minute, or performing them in elongated sequences up to three minutes. All of which can be both intriguing and downright funny.

Take, for example, Abubo and the water containers. The first time we see this vignette, Abubo walks sedately to the front of the stage carrying a vase filled to the brim and held awkwardly at shoulder level, the object being not to

spill a drop. In the quick time sequence, he rushes in with a small glass full of water. In the extended time sequence, he is grappling with a huge fish tank. These visual changes are delightful surprises.

Then there is Paquet and the shepherd's pie recipe. The look of triumph on Paquet's face when he gets through his first recitation exactly on the minute is priceless. In the quick-time version, he can barely get out the ingredients. In the extended time sequence, he throws in lots of asides, like a warning not to leave the oven unattended to check e-mails during the quick broil. (Apparently one broils the top layer of mashed potatoes to make them crisp.) Okay, so is this dance? Taking inspiration from pedestrian aspects of daily life, *It's about time* is squarely anchored in the postmodern world of contemporary dance. But this is also the least "dancey" show Trent has ever created.

Still, its real power lies in the way it challenges our perceptions – and even our code of ethics.

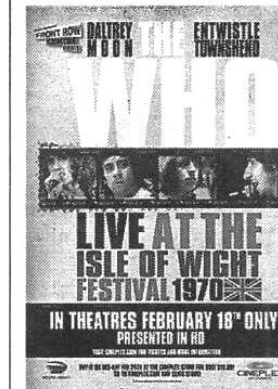
For instance, in a quick-time sequence, Kamino attempts to execute a series of tiny, rapid jumps, basically aiming at the impossible. In her jumping sequence, however, Hilliard cheats: She puts running shoes on her hands and bangs the floor with them to simulate jumps.

Whether you choose to look deeply into the piece, or see it as a simple exercise, *It's about time* is a very entertaining way to spend exactly one hour.

» *It's about time: 60 dances in 60 minutes* continues at the Enwave Theatre until Feb. 14.

Taking inspiration from pedestrian aspects of daily life, *It's about time* is squarely anchored in the post-modern world of contemporary dance.

TOMMY CAN YOU HEAR ME?



In an online video in prelude to its upcoming tour, Winnipeg rockers Inward Eye invites fans to, among other things, come on out and "lose some hearing." Given their appreciation for classic rock (Alice Cooper and the Who in particular, with some Clash thrown in), it wouldn't be lost on the young trio that wind-milling guitarist Pete Townshend has severely impaired hearing because of that same cavalier attitude toward cochlear health.

Townshend and the Who were known for limitless decibel levels, particularly in the *Tommy*-era captured in the concert film *Live at the Isle of Wight Festival*. In advance of its Blu-ray DVD release on Feb. 24, the film shot in 1970 shows the Who at its loudest and fiercest. It was released on standard DVD format in 2004; the new version, screening at participating Cineplex theatres on Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m., features a new interview with Townshend (info at cineplex.com).

As for the men of Inward Eye, their road to hearing impairment starts today at the El Mocambo (11 p.m., \$6, 464 Spadina Ave.), where they'll pick up their guitars and play, just like the Who of yesterday. Earplugs recommended. » Brad Wheeler

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