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**The Other Half**

***Dancenow Festival Twenty Ten, nights 2 through 4***

**By** [**QUINN BATSON**](http://www.offoffoff.com/about/bio/quinnbatson37.php) **Offoffoff.com**

All of the remaining 30 choreographers in Dancenow's Festival Twenty Ten deserve credit, but they will not all get it here, for reasons of coverage balance, space and time. In reverse alphabetical order by evening, in reverse evening order, these dances stood out, struck a chord or otherwise passed an arbitrary bar.

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| **FESTIVAL TWENTY TEN TOO** |
| Choreography by: **Takehiro Ueyama, Paul Singh, Marta Renzi, Lisa Race, Chris Elam, Christopher Williams, Ellis Wood, Makiko Tamura, John Heginbotham**. |
|  **SCHEDULE** |
| Dance Theater WorkshopSeptember 9, 10, 11, 2010 |

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The final night, another 9/11, seemed especially charged. TAKE Dance came with full-throttle neurotic and propulsive energy in *Salaryman*, with an agitated, spotlit Kristen Arnold yielding the floor to people hurtling through space with newspapers, manic on the way to work. Kyle Hotchkiss and Elise Drew get to fly even higher than the rest in several duets of circling leaps and extreme skill. Speed is key for all, with bodies running, sliding and sprawling across the floor. Yet it also manages to be more than enchanted haste, with good flow and variety and an ending, with Arnold again agitated in spotlight but being soothed by Hotchkiss, that implies this curse of haste may be breakable.

*Gasp* shows that Paul Singh is getting better at making narrated pieces, breaking up the narration and dancing into more palatable pieces and finding timing that works, with the able help of Courtney Drasner, Jessica Martineau and Anne Merrick. Elements of absurdity — handcuffs, bandages and smeared lipstick — are now allowed to go their own way, rather than being overexplained, a welcome change.

Arthur Aviles and Tina Vasquez are a joy to watch in *Nobody's Darling*, a breezing and warmly funny duet by Marta Renzi. He swings her deftly around his shoulders and she keeps him deftly in line. Their easiness and warmth with each other is contagious and soothing. These two are old pros with nothing to prove, impressive as ever.

Lisa Race is back, too, with *Fold*, a really fresh duet by Raja Kelly and Kaitlin Morse, who use folded notes as means of appeasement, extracting them from their pockets to give to the other when the tension gets a bit too high and anger may be next. There is plenty of upsidedown-ness, chasing and spring in the partnering and jumps onstage, and a bright feeling throughout. The papers are a mystery we have no need to solve, private currency between friends or lovers.

Chris Elam's *Misnomer* feels new though it is old (1998), a neat trick for physical comedy that seems like it must have been done before; no one can put together a strange little world like Elam. There is an element of sex in apparently nonsexual partnerings, and yet his character/creatures strive for love or connection, and definitely compete. They are either looking for sex that is unrecognizable to us or having it and thinking it as natural as breathing.

Christopher Williams, on Friday evening, puts strange things together as well, in *Mumbo-jumbo*, a duet for Raja Kelly and Paul Singh. Are black and brown people wearing white lipstick and nappy afro wigs, that would look like blackface on white people, thus in whiteface? Is there some connection between Stepin Fetchit and Bollywood musicals? Dunno, but Kelly and Singh sure give it a go, to hilarious effect. A blackout midway casts everything into doubt, though, as Kelly rises from his back to give a second spotlit blackface speech, the two then resume dancing crazily to Bollywood music and Kelly strips a shrieking Singh of his shirt and probably more to end the dance.

Ellis Wood is only slightly out of order in *MOM*, her solo about. Wood throws in quite a bit of real dancing, and her references to, possibly, a mother who slapped and her own experience as a new mother are quick and fleeting but clear and strong. She uses music by Max Richter to give gravity to what she does onstage, a smart and necessary choice, and one that helps makes the piece emotionally moving.

Even a short version of Makiko Tamura's *Order Made* shows why it won her recent acclaim and a competition, with the irreplaceable Ryoji Sasamoto.

And Thursday night, *Throwaway*, by John Heginbotham, was perhaps the most entertaining seven minutes of all 280 presented. Brian Lawson is adept at deadpan fiercefarce, dancing in a spotlight to robotic lyrics with the vocodered word "technology" as an intermittent refrain (music by Thomas Bagalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo). When Maile Okamura joins him in the spotlight for a dance battle, the result is understated and over the top, and indescribably funny.

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