

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

La La La Human Steps: Amelia

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, May 28th, 2014

I have long been a fan of [La La La Human Steps](#), the contemporary Montreal based dance company run by choreographer Edouard Locke who came on the scene in 1980 and inside of a short time was working with musicians and groups including David Bowie, Skinny Puppy, and Frank Zappa. Their early choreography mixed irreverent punk music with movement that was reminiscent of classical but with no concern for pointed feet or height of extension. An early signature move was their “Des Axe” turn – a kind of barrel jump with the body spinning ramrod straight and parallel to the ground, and it was thrilling to watch.

I was first introduced to their work by a friend I met at the Sundance Dance Film Lab, the late, wonderful, humanitarian filmmaker [U. Robert \(Robin\) Romano](#), who had done camera work for an early dance film, “Human Sex”, in which the world was introduced to Locke’s choreography via the amazing Louise Lecavalier. With her curly bleach white hair, and muscular frame, she emoted a kind of androgynous beauty and femininity while alternately hurling herself towards or lifting her male partners. In that early film, after an incredibly energetic duet, the entire room gradually fills with water and concludes with Louise and her partner swimming away like fish.



Stark shadows in *Amelia*

Over time, Locke has returned to classical roots with dance works that are phenomenally precise, acrobatic, and *fast*. I have heard that from rehearsal to rehearsal he gradually and almost imperceptibly speeds up the music so that the dancers can adjust their movement accordingly.

Directed and choreographed by Locke in 2002, *Amelia*, is a beautiful piece of dance on film that won awards and critical acclaim at numerous festivals when it came out. *Amelia* features a hypnotic, original, minimalist score written by David Lang for violin, cello, piano and voice, and lyrics from five of Lou Reed’s most famous works that he created in the 60s for the Velvet Underground. It is beautifully shot from multiple angles, some dizzying and swooping, in a space that was tailor-made for the film itself. The shadows and lighting in tandem with the shots and the movement add layers of beauty to the stark visuals.

The original film is much longer and there are multiple shorter, edited versions on the web, all of which I invite you to look at. *Enjoy*.

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