Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Question of You

Sarah Elgart · Thursday, November 26th, 2015

Dance is a rigorous enterprise. When in pursuit of excellence in technique or performance, pain and repetition is rote – a dancer learns to live with them. And whether it's classical contemporary or krumping, Butoh or B' boying, each plateau reached is met with a new one in its place wherein time, patience, and tremendous persistence are required.

In classical ballet, warm up begins at the barre. A dancer balances with, stretches on, and pulls against it. It's both friend and foe… The beginning of the pain, the harbinger of exacting detail and specific moves intended to strengthen or increase flexibility in nearly every inch of the body, the gateway to the comparative freedom of center when dance can finally approach flight.

Allison Ulrich at the barre in "Question of You"

Such is the subject of **Question of You**, the lovely and telling film by dancer/choreographer/director Charissa Barton. In this short with a little known song of the same title written and performed by Prince, the dancer's relationship with the barre metaphorically mirrors that of any relationship. Pushing through exacting movement and repetitiveness, through friction and resistance, she searches for a way to stay inspired, a way to keep it fresh. Appropriately, the context mirrored the content of this work. The solo Barton created for this piece – performed entirely in pointe shoes – was so difficult that it could not be done in one take, and had to be broken up sequentially for the shoot. A powerhouse of a dancer, the talented Allison Ulrich was reportedly truly in pain by the end of the long shoot day. But as is the case with any professional dancer, stamina and perseverance demanded that she tackle the fiery movement and get to the end, when she was finally allowed to look back, see the progress she had made, and move on.

The dancer approaches her barre in "Question of You"

Question of You successfully "*invokes the flirtation, determination, passion, frustration and ongoing complexity of any intimate relationship*". Strikingly shot in black and white with a three camera set up (two Canon 5D's and a Ronin) by director of photography Ben Tedesco, and smartly edited by Jeremy Jurin, it is well worth the watch. ***Enjoy!***

[embedvideo id="132178828? website="vimeo"]

This entry was posted on Thursday, November 26th, 2015 at 8:16 am and is filed under Film, Music, Dance
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