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REVIEW - SHEN WEI TO ARCIMBOLDI

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The masterpieces of Shen Wei: two beautiful choreographies presented at the Arcimboldi Theater

Barbara Palumbo

Shen Wei was born in China and there he began to study dance. The attraction of the Big Apple then took hold and there he forged an artistic spirit of the highest level. His art is expressed not only in dance, but also in painting and design—as shown in the splendid backdrop that he painted for the first piece on the program and the rigor exhibited in the second work.

Folding was created in 2000 and has the ability to transport you into another world. The music, Buddhist chants, and the movement of the dancers, who seem to skate on the stage, catapult you into an almost hypnotic state. While this almost forty minute sequence flows smoothly for its viewers, it is a significant commitment for its dancers. The control required for the many "images," which are akin to the world of **Butoh** (although this would be of Japanese origin), is no small feat. The movements are slow and flow from one location to another imperceptibly. The difficulty is

accentuated, above all, because many of these movements are composed of interactions between male and female dancers.



Collective Measures has a completely different flavor. The theme of relationships and loneliness among humans emerges from the start. At the beginning, when all the dancers are on stage moving, our attention is captured by the image of a solo dancer projected on the backdrop, a dancer who's sharp, almost dislocating articulations of the joints don't interrupt the wonderful, fluid quality of her movement. Shortly after, her role is taken by another artist who performs a solo on a giant blank canvas with primary colors distributed on its four corners. First appearing like a nude still-life, soon her flesh-colored costume takes life with four primary acrylic colors which haphazardly mix and unite as she dances. Only at the end of the sequence do two dancers raise and show the canvas: a real painting. Two art forms in one context made by the same artist. Very suggestive. The remarkable choreographer has even produced a double effect with his corps dances: a composition both suggestive and truly insightful. A performance of the highest level.