



These dancers have that 'wow' factor

By Tresca Weinstein Published 6:36 pm, Saturday, February 17, 2018

Bridgman Packer Dance is made up of two people: choreographers, performers and video artists Art Bridgman and Myrna Packer. But on stage, they've got a lot of company.

The pair's "Video Partnering" choreography, developed over the past 15 years, uses high-tech video technology and time-delayed playback to conjure up a crowd's worth of Bridgmans and Packers that interact with the real ones in all kinds of inventive ways.

At the Egg on Friday, they presented two works, "Remembering What Never Happened" and "Under The Skin," both featuring multiple versions of their virtual selves.

More Information

Bridgman Packer Dance

When: 8 p.m. Friday

Where: The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany

Program: "Under the Skin,"
"Remembering What Never Happened"

Length: 90 minutes, one intermission.

"Under the Skin," is pure magic — a nonstop flow of seamlessly integrated video (by Peter Bobrow and Jim Monroe) and live dancing that produces one surprising and fresh moment after another. In one section, the two morph in and out of a cascade of letters and symbols rushing by on the screen behind them. In another, they join a host of their digital counterparts in a series of fast-paced, precisely timed entrances and exits.

There's also a fabulously clever sequence in which their costumes become the screens, and their clones are projected

onto each other's bodies, creating two Bridgman-Packer mashups. It's a lovely metaphor for collaboration and also for marriage (the two are husband and wife).

Slower and more poignant, "Remembering What Never Happened" introduces the elements of text, with overlapping narratives recorded by the pair, and evocative backdrops, drawn from footage taken in the Mojave Desert. As opposed to the nearly-real clones in "Under the Skin," here the pair's onscreen doubles are often blurred and wraithlike, dissolving into abstractions and disembodied parts — like memories made visible. At one point, the two stand still and watch their duplicates continue to move; they might be observing their former — or future — selves.

With their minimal personnel and unique approach, Bridgman Packer offers a model of sustainability for both dancers and dance companies. They've been choreographing and performing together for more than two decades, and — in some ways — may only now be hitting their peak, winning a Bessie Award last year and "best of the year" kudos for their 2016 New York City season.

What sets them apart is their ability to wow us with special effects without losing any of the warmth and humanity that characterize their flesh-and-blood presence. This is technology skillfully wielded, in a way that invites poetic interpretation and emotional connection.

Tresca Weinstein is a frequent contributor to the Times Union.

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