

trailerpilot [dance &c.]

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Poonie's Faburet

Tonight at Link's Hall, Jyl Fehrenkamp hosted a particularly high-powered installment of the long-running, quarterly-or-so Monday night Poonie's Cabaret. (If you're not familiar with the story behind the name or the series' raison d'être there's an out-of-date albeit generally accurate rundown here.) It's commonly an event featuring young performers and chancy work: Tonight's show found the kids inspired and their chances paying off.



Peter Carpenter will perform *My Fellow Americans*, a world premiere work and Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist Grant project, this May at Link's and so I won't say much about the solo excerpt from that show he danced tonight other than it was another installment of recent activity that demands Americans not be missed once it arrives. Stay tuned here and you won't miss a thing—promise.

Fehrenkamp herself followed up with a bit exposing a deep vein of fandom I can certainly relate to: An intense, almost congenital *Star Wars* obsession whose harsh, shocking betrayal nearly ruined the entirety of 1999 and possibly each year since. She did an admirable job of sliding into performance and quickly back out to MC-ing; I would have mutilated both in the process.

Adam Rose of Antibody Dance—in drag as “Elena”—punched the evening in the face with an inspired, beyond-odd dance solo that nearly defies description. Elena is like the corpse of Dorothy Gale dressed as Scarlett O'Hara performing acidic, clownish kabuki in a mute Royce Reed routine involving a gas can, a few worried-to-dust letters, and conviction far beyond his surely-not-all-that-many years. I'm definitely looking forward to more from this intriguing young man.

Long overdue was my introduction tonight to Julie Mayo of Dim Sum Dance. There's a beautiful inquisitiveness to Mayo's performance that pierced her solo's many scenes like piano wire beading a strand of investigations and mischievous theatrical buds. Opening with the wrapping of a white box in red paper (which recalled the opening scene of Matthew Barney's 2005 film *Drawing Restraint 9*) to match a second box on the other side of the space, Mayo proceeds through a series of tasks neither significant nor throwaway. She expertly sustained an atmosphere of creative mystery; each transition seemed the result of a patient brainstorm on unpredictability. Snapping her fingers with gluttonous glee and flying through clear, curious phrasework, it was obvious Mayo's internal dialogue was rich and complete. What made her work fascinating was that it remained hidden—the richness of interior experience was simultaneously palpable and out of reach.



Then came The Dance Team. Fehrenkamp introduced them with the tidbit that they'll be taking themselves to Hell's Kitchen's The Tank for a show April 11 and workshop the day after—I expect their mix of extensive planning and close-enough execution will resonate just fine with the J/M/Z crowd. Taking the space nonchalantly from the floor-seated house overflow, idon'twannabedefeated X 1000 (in progress) consisted on paper of a few dance numbers to Crystal Castles, The Spice Girls and Temple of the Dog (surprising considering they were probably in diapers when “Hunger Strike” hit #4 on the charts) broken only by an interlude of sloppy Styx a capella. What they have going for them, if they can figure out how to isolate it and maximize its impact, is a sense for the boundary between performance and simply “doing.” Despite the fact there's nothing close to radical about their movement or compositions, they're astute at anticipating what the audience assumes is going on and subverting it. I'd rather see them explore this territory more than exploit the fact

that Steve May is willing to take all his clothes off in public. It's brave, sure, and it turns the pedestrian quality of what they do somewhat on its head, but considering no one else on the Team so much as peeled off a t-shirt it read more than anything like Mr. May is merely an exhibitionist in search of a venue. As an aside, I'll note that I haven't seen that many toques on the floor since Ghrai Harrison (far right) left DanceWorks Chicago. Anyway, good luck out there, kids, and for God's sake keep enjoying yourselves—it's contagious.

There was a series of Reese's commercials in the 1990s that I had all but forgotten until Matthew Hollis made it the extremely effective punchline of a characteristically tangential, self-effacing and -aggrandizing solo performance that's firmly within his realm, namely narrative comedy shrouded in contemporary dance touches and an outsized personality that's always on stage. He's talented, smart, and sublimely comfortable in performance. I part ways with Hollis on whether his investigations of cheerleading constitute viable, vital work in contemporary performance, but there's no arguing with the extent to which he's honed his chops as a solo artist—the adoration of his fans is not unjustified.



I was frankly blown away by The Moving Architects. Erin Carlisle Norton's group of dancers (Anna Goldman, Stefanie Karlin, Alison Riazi and Jessie Young) as well as Ian Hatcher in the space on acoustic guitar and xylophone (glockenspiel?), are obviously serious about what they're doing and how they do it. Clad in puffy vests and chromatically-paired skirts, the quartet they presented, from *This Sandy Cube*, showed impressive structural invention and sound execution throughout; the vocabulary suited its interpreters well and all points of intersection were thoughtfully and completely worked out. It's not a happy dance: Melancholy and frustration saturated the dancers' formalized, almost ritualistic interactions and the closing section especially read as a move toward entropy rather than peaceful resolution. Handfuls of sand emerged from their vest pockets and were poured out onto the space's floor, turning the entire room into a mournfully-empty hourglass running out of what little time it had to begin with. It was a closer well-suited for a program in a winter I think we all are eager to see end.