



3rd J.U.i.C.E. Hip-Hop Dance Festival
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It was a night bound to send the spelling sticklers and copy editors scurrying for cover but in the end, the J.U.i.C.E. HIP-HOP FESTIVAL at the Ford delivered the peace, love and diversity show we've been used to since the festival presentation debuted three years ago. And while the overall appeal of the program continues to develop under the umbrella of the Ford's sponsorship this year's event brought to the stage both wildly innovative dance making , an music in the street genre as well as other performances which were less than ordinary. Nonetheless, *Justice by Uniting in Creative Energy* is now ten years along in its mission providing after school arts programming in the Rampart District and you could see just what that meant on stage and in the hubbub of the crowded audience Saturday evening.

Some things didn't materialize from the feel-good chaos of the evening. Street moves on the Plaza prior to the show--gone; and a planned dance contest at intermission advertised on the program was replaced with some informal fooling around on stage by the crew, *Instant Noodles*. Music credits intended for the program often went missing and there were a few technical black holes as the production lurched through two long acts. Even so, there remained a lot to like.

In general, the great divide seemed to be between those glossing the *hip hop* genre with thin contexts and weak theater and those who were really taking it somewhere. Amy "Catfox" Campion and *Antics Performance* in *Electric Hustle* gave us choreography that riffed successfully on the New Orleans street funeral. The featured trumpeter, Devin Williams, served as an integral part of the choreography at the same time delivering a theatrical and musically savvy performance He literally *blew* the dancers on and off in a scenario that originated on the theater's hillside and processed to the stage. The dancing was supported by DJ Kenzo and drummer Sammy "Punky" Balfour. Campion and her seven dancers responded to the improvised setting with solo and unison movement as well as effective partnering.

Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli dug into the realm of the deeply personal with his solo linking disability and dance frontiers. Using a chair and his crutches Patuelli was engrossing with power moves, balances, floor work and air time in *Ground Up & Beyond*, co-created with Kate "Lynx" Alsterlund. For Patuelli it turned out to be more about what you *can* do than what you can't. The title limns the trajectory of the piece as it moves from the floor to inspiration, and finally to a profound sense of confidence. The other exceptional solo choreography of the evening was *World War What? Ever?* by d. Sabela grimes. The performance relied heavily on high concept theater and the wildly idiosyncratic character Grimes creates--a he/she who channels butoh, standup and Marcel Marceau in equal measure. Yes, that strange. But by the end of the humor propelled performance you could almost sense what it was about. With music, spoken word and radical costuming all by Grimes, the performance had imagination to burn.


Wandering even further afield from hip hop was *Lux Aeterna* in *Fratres* . Jacob "Kujo" Lyons joined the four members of his all male company in a work that echoed the solemnity of Arvo Pärt's score, played in this version in an arrangement for solo violin and orchestra. The music embraces opposites in the frantic wailing arpeggios in the solo violin and the restorative calm buried in the orchestral accompaniment. Lyons' choreography captured those divisions with scurrying floor work and the signature pauses, cantilevered balances and power moves that identify the *Lux Aeterna* style. Lamonte "Tales" Goode delivered fearsome dancing in his solo section. Set free to embrace other music, this movement has emotional possibilities waiting to be identified. Goode showed how valuable that can be with what was easily the deepest and most emotionally charged dancing of the evening. Thoughtful costuming--dark hoodies-- transformed Lyons' brotherhood of *Fratres* into a solemn street clan who swung easily between menace and spirituality. Lighting that emphasized stark shadow and monastic gloom was artfully supplied by Griffin Behm and Rachel Levy who lit all of the evenings performances.

World Order, under the spiritual guidance Genki Sudo, suited up for its inimitable brand of Japanese salary men popping and locking their way through an untitled ensemble piece. They were joined briefly by Mari Koda in an improvised prologue. *World Order* makes its statement with extreme unison movement. They came up short on content but still made a commanding impression with their eye-catching synthetic movement. Their appeal rides on the individual virtuosity of the crew and a finely wrought group identity. They managed some stunning special effects including their signature slow motion move- ments which played well moving down the steps from the upper level to the main stage. The piece was lit effectively by Behm and Levy. Catchy prerecorded pop tracks laced with hook-loaded beats were credited to Sudo and company. The music was easily as good as the dancing itself.



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World Order - photo: Fizzah Raza

Instant Noodles--bowls high, sticks swirling--covered the bases with their straight ahead but clever choreography in yet another untitled piece with no music credits. Costumed in white dress shirts and bow ties this six man crew delivered an entertaining sketch of athletic dancing that gave us the usual sequencing of solos, pairings, virtuoso moves and ensemble work. They have the ability to do much more than entertain but stuck to a predictable hip hop script as did *Versastyle: Next Generation* in the opening piece, *Keep on Dancin'*. Artistic Directors Miss Funk and Breezelee put together a satisfying production piece for this sixteen member company that helped kick off the evening with a charge of pure no-frills dance.

In the rhyming department Toquon of *Soul Elevation* laid down the best freestyling of the evening in his closing, *Take 'Em Back*. Venturing off the stage and into the orchestra Toquon delivered finally the requisite party atmosphere. He was backed by the ubiquitous --someone grab that moniker if its not already taken-- DJ Kenzo who was everywhere all night long on this program. The festival was produced by Emiko Sugiyama; Jacob Lyons and Amy Campion were the Co-Artistic Directors. The festival program was in part sponsored through the generosity of the Flourish Foundation.

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J.U.i.C.E. HIP-HOP DANCE FESTIVAL
Saturday October 2, 2010 - The Ford Amphitheatre

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