

Arts PRESS

— REVIEWS by FIONA SCOTT NORMAN —

PARADANCE #4 + (Expected Space) La Mama

As the title of this work probably suggests, we are not talking 42nd Street here. Paradance #4, devised and performed by Tess De Quincey and Stuart Lynch, is a fiercely focused, oblique movement piece which sits somewhere between Butoh, performance art, and multi-media performance. It is variously tedious, disturbing, arresting and confronting, and at all times the performances were totally committed and exactly, exquisitely realised.

The set is basically bare except for a suspended length of transparent plastic sheeting, the costumes and characters reminiscent in a faint sort of way of Estragon and Vladimir from *Waiting For Godot*. There is a slide projected onto the wall which may - or may not - have been a human pelvis. That's about it for literal meaning or interpretation.

The piece is not easy to watch, mainly because there are long periods of slow repetition, and because the sleepy collapsing doll-like characters created by de Quincey and Lynch are really creepy and repulsive in a *Stepford Wives* sort of way. It's a bit like seeing snippets from a psychologically based horror movie, and they are fascinating on that level. Interestingly, though, there is a short section in the middle of the work where Lynch does some extraordinary vocal work which is very loud, very unusual, very brilliant, and totally unexpected. Preceding this is a good 20 minutes of movement so subtle it is hardly discernable to the human eye, so Lynch's wailing is a formidable contrast; it is almost as though the first part of the work exists purely to create a quiet space for Lynch's outburst to have the maximum impact. On that level it surely works, and that 5 minutes is stunning and worth the wait. The dance stuff at the end is really appealing, and both de Quincey and Lynch perform this work with the precision born of unimaginable hours spent polishing their craft.