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## Metadata review: Dance meets science in surprising, emotional work by De Quincey

Jill Sykes



### METADATA

Riverside, September 15. Until September 17

★★★★★

What a fascinating piece of dance theatre – unique and thought-provoking. The main thrust of this review is compliments – and regrets that it has only three performances. But first *Metadata* needs some explanation.

This double bill of dance by the De Quincey Co has been built around a collaboration with experts in maths and physics over six years. After the opening performance, creatives and a professor of astrophysics talked about their responses with a mixed arts and science audience.

It was intriguing to hear such a range of interpretations. Lacking a scientific background, mine was different again. What we had in common was admiration and delight at the mind-opener we had just seen.

*Metadata* is performed by seasoned dancers Tess de Quincey and Peter Fraser. It begins slowly as two sentient beings – living organisms rather than humans – make their unconnected journeys around a stage lit up by video blips in what develops as an extraordinary piece of visual animation by Boris Morris Bagattini, based on mathematical equations.

Movement flows through the bodies of the performers in an experience of intense concentration that is informed by their lifelong explorations of other worlds and beliefs, on this earth and beyond.

Powered by Warren Burt's music, they merge into the visuals and out again in performing rhythms that cohere yet often surprise. And yes, they finally meet in an unemotional embrace that turns two bodies into one. Out there, in an imagined cosmos, it is conversely and unexpectedly emotional.

A gem of a solo by de Quincey, *Pure Light*, begins the program. It is more typical of her personal style, developed from the butoh-inspired *BodyWeather*. This is fragile yet enduringly strong: legs stumble, feet turn in, the body crouches, hands reach up imploringly. All this is captured and projected within patterns traced by video images (Martin Fox) and actual fluorescent lighting, a homage to American artist Dan Flavin. As they move and change, so does the performer's body in an engrossing dance to music by Pimmon.