



Review: I Witness at The Blue Theatre [Dance]

When one thinks of meditation, often the image that comes to mind is someone sitting in the lotus position with their eyes closed. However, meditation can take many forms. In some Eastern traditions movement can be a form of meditation. **Tutto Theatre Company's** new dance and spoken word show, *I Witness* is, in many ways, a meditation on the concepts of awareness, reality and dreams. However, it isn't simply to be watched. The show engages the audience directly, and brings them into a collective meditation on truly being awake and aware.

I Witness

Thursdays - Saturdays, 20 August - 4 September 2010
 Blue Theatre ([916 Springdale Ave](#))
 8 pm, \$15
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While many shows have a chatty atmosphere when the audience is being seated or waiting for the performance to begin, this show is different. Instead, there's a tone of reverence in the theater. The performers are on stage, sitting, lying, still. Then they move, seeming to improvise a brief glimpse of a dance, before again remaining still. They make eye contact with the audience, who is unusually quiet. There's a sense that although the performance has not begun, it is already starting.



I Witness

This serious tone of reflection and ambivalence continues throughout the entire show. The show itself mimics a dream. One of the performers is lying on stage, as if sleeping, at the very top, and at the end we see him again in this position. Hazy images are projected onto the wall, which has a crumpled fabric spread across it. It is as if one could almost make out the images, but not quite, much like remembering a dream. *I Witness* is a mix of dance and spoken word. Some of the spoken word is original material while other parts you might recognize if you're familiar with Hindu texts or quantum physics. It's divided into 10 parts, 10 original dances choreographed by **Amanda Oakley, Shawn Nasralla, and Jennifer Micallef.**

The texts and the dances present a call to pause and be mindful of deeper currents, of the connection of all things, of the presence of a deeper reality. There are direct references to quantum theory, pointing out that the observer cannot be taken out of our understanding of the universe. In the beautiful movements there are at times a sense of struggle. A struggle to remain aware, to remain connected. A struggle against loneliness, against the biological and cultural imperatives that make us into walking automatons, robots or puppets. The show seems to be saying that though we are individuals, we are not individuals living in isolation. We are part of a greater system, and that system is part of us. There is a unity at work in the world. The audience is part of the experience. Without the audience, the show does not exist. Without a witness, an event does not take place. Thus the audience is called to reflect upon the meaning of the dances, called to be aware, throughout the show, but is also a part of this meaning and awareness. The show sets out on an ambitious journey by dealing with concepts such as the subconscious, the nature of reality and resistance to the machinations of modern life. While it doesn't give any sort of solid resolution to these questions, it instead asks one to struggle, to strive, to pay attention--to be aware. That is itself, in many ways, a comfort.

In a world where so many people seek quick and easy answers to complex questions, it is nice to see a performance directly access the mystery and paradox present in our lives and accept it on its own terms.

By [Patrick Knisely](#) in [Arts and Entertainment](#) on August 31, 2010 9:47 AM [0 Comments](#) [4 Likes](#) 519 Views

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