

'An Attic an Exit' at the Unknown Theater



Lean To Productions dancers use unusual props and quirky costumes in fun show.

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Special to The Times
July 19, 2008

In a mere 50 minutes, dancer-choreographers and longtime collaborators Rachael Lincoln and Leslie Seiters can create a magical world that is part Marceau, part Magritte and all polished craft. That's what they do in "An Attic an Exit," which received its L.A. premiere at Hollywood's Unknown Theater on Thursday.

And by the way: Their movement vocabulary is nothing less than stunning.

Currently based in Southern California, these lanky dancers who appear under the banner Lean To Productions, have created a quirky *pas de deux* for the 21st century. Whether a fable, a foray into the surreal or two facets of one brilliant gemstone, this engaging theater piece is a precise *mélange* of mime, muscular ingenuity and music. Indeed, Tyler Crosser's potent score (heard on tape) offers jaunty piano and accordion riffs and is enhanced by a clutch of provocative sound bites by other composers.

Sporting close-cropped platinum dos, Kabuki-esque makeup and khaki culottes, the duo first appears topless while wriggling into identical navy blue blazers, but with one hitch: The jackets are suspended from rigging, and the dancers shortly take to the air in their preppies-run-amok guise.

A bout with a suitcase ensues, as Lincoln, *butoh*-like, balances on the valise, her arms extended to allow loose pearls to spill from her sleeves. Enigmatic and strangely beautiful, the scenario also features her toying with a rope (an umbilical cord?) and ultimately becoming part of a cat's-cradle tableau.

Seiters too has an overnight case, and the pair, occasionally convulsing with delirious screams, manipulate these props as if to the Cirque du Soleil manner born.

The wackiness continues: The suitcases yield endless strands of pearls that appear to be pasta -- funky spaghetti that's a prelude to dinner -- and Seiters brandishes cutlery with gusto. Sitting down to, er, eat, the dancers instead create a sideshow with household objects -- crockery and jars of sugar -- in a scene Ed Sullivan's plate-spinners would have relished.

Who are these elfin creatures? One can't help but wonder. At times seemingly joined at the hip and shoulders, with their heads bobbing through each other's arms like curious Siamese twins, they also toss off handstands and execute luscious lifts and backbends. Sporadic sly smiles creep across their visages, raising another question: Where does Seiters end and Lincoln begin?

Or vice versa.

It matters not, though, as this seductive tea party, deftly lighted by Elaine Buckholtz, transcends the commonplace to reveal Art with a capital A.