

Beijing Modern Dance: A Long Way To Go

3.2/10 **Review by Ben Franks, 26/05/11**

The beginning of the short one-hour performance by the Beijing Modern Dance Company produced some awe-inspiring vocals and slow moving dance that enticed the audience into a captivated silence. However, for me, it took an unfortunate turn when the vocals and music corresponding to the performance grew repetitive and mildly bland. The silent awe began to fade and seemed to drift into an instinctive British politeness to simply remain quiet during a time of silent tediousness.

The slow, seemingly spontaneous actions of the two same dancers did provide a degree of unusual intrigue and had moments where it seemed to echo some attempts at a narrative. However, it took the short-lived, culturally-injected dramatic sequences of the dance to reawaken the audience into the tales of entrapment, suppression and motherhood that were easily the performance's highlights.

One of the greatest disappointments of this piece was the approach. The movements and sequence frequently lacked clarity, making it difficult for me to enjoy the performance.

There were some momentary gems of impressive skill, such as the smooth heel-toe footwork in the short lived drama sequences and the swish-swash ballet-like angelic movements, but the majority of it appeared to be a montage of thoroughly repetitive whirling of the arms or rolling around the stage.

The Beijing Modern Dance was easily an act of defining culture but just wasn't intriguing enough to present an entertaining performance. The crew did compliment the sleepy performance with tastefully professional lighting but, for me, it just slipped away from reaching its potential.