

Shen Wei Dance Arts “Limited States” is unlimited in beauty

By Denise Cerniglia
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Shen Wei Dance Arts is performing spectacular ADF commissioned world premiere *Limited States* this weekend at the **American Dance Festival**. Breathtaking and suspenseful, artistic director **Shen Wei**'s choreography grabs the audience from the first motion on the stage and holds us through the very last.

One remarkable element in this performance is the use of film, shadow, paint and lighting. Many companies have used one or all of these, but Shen Wei uses them so effectively that they blend seamlessly and compliment the dancers. When there are dancers on the stage, the use of film or other media can sometimes be a distraction. Other times it seems the technical tricks achieved through the use film are the main attraction rather than the art of the choreography or the skill of the dancers (**Pilobolus** is a perfect example for both of these uses). Shen Wei, however, so thoughtfully places images that they become an indispensable part of the dance. The projection of dancers doing similar, but never identical movements adds depth to the live happenings on stage and gives the impression of an alternate world. What appears to be cosmic dust transforms subtly into a dancer; post-programming TV fuzz blends exquisite soloist **Sara Procopio** with her background, upon which her well-defined shadow takes life; simple lines, like light through venetian blinds into a dark room, add texture across the dancers in a subtle and complete way.

The dancers in their scant flesh-colored attire move like **Rodin** sculptures that have come to life. They are full of life and possess a perfect balance of physical fitness and conceptual communication. Every move down to the very smallest is important and is delivered with thoughtfulness. *Limited States* is natural – the original style of Shen Wei creates new ways moving without ever being strained.

The music, composed by **Daniel Burke**, varies from melodious to chilling. The dance and music fit perfectly together, and you can trust that if one sound brings discomfort, relief will follow shortly.

I can't pretend to know what Shen Wei intended to convey in this piece, but to me it was about striving for an otherworldly perfection similar to **Plato's** idea that life on Earth is a mere replication of a perfect world. In the end, Shen Wei Dance Arts achieved unity with their otherworldly forms.

Attention to detail and creative genius put this dance in a category of its own. Don't miss this world premier! If you don't have plans to see it yet, this is a highly recommended piece of art that **you can still see tonight and Saturday at DPAC at 8pm.**



Rick McCullough, Photographer