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REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**Myriam Gourfink**'Les Temps Tirailles'**January 2009**Paris, Centre Pompidou**by Graham Watts*

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Myriam Gourfink's choreography moves dancers with the flow of a slowly meandering stream; barely mobile - yet always fluid - her work focuses great attention on the slow development of tiny movements governed by the dancers' breathing. It stands at a long distance removed from other modern choreography.

*'Les Temps Tirailés'* means "time torn" (or pulled) and this premiere of Gourfink's new work deconstructs conventional concepts of performance and time and emphasises the unique revitalising of dance at every staging. The work is ongoing when the audience arrives and it happens both live on stage and streamed onto screens elsewhere. It also continues Gourfink's exploration of the complex relationship between music and

choreography, entwining her imperceptible movement with the haunting, spectral score by Austrian composer, Georg Friedrich Haas that engages two violas, a bassoon and one movement of silence within a computer-generated electronic framework.

Elite yoga – specifically of the Tibetan tantric trend - is the key to the strength of her seven female dancers and their ability to unfold long complex body positions and balances. Many times in this hour-long performance, the

development of the next pose or movement seemed an impossible stretch even for such muscular bodies and yet, of course, it always came and sometimes in the most unexpected way. The movement and music seemed somehow to interact with 23 flat computer screens suspended over the dancers' heads, and clearly much of the movement was improvised between key choreographic points in the composition. The relentless, slow circulation of the ensemble around the small stage progressed through seamless transitions into the construction of remarkable architectural shapes from the seven human building blocks. The harmonised excellence of this unit deserves individual recognition and so I'll name them - Clémence Coconnier, Céline Debyser, Carole Garriga, Déborah Lary, Julie Salgues, Cindy Van Acker and Véronique Weil.



*Les Temps Tirailés*

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The academic focus of Gourfink's work requires an immense and sustained effort of concentration from her audience with the repetitive score and slow movement inviting the onset of random thoughts. This isn't a performance to be taken on a full stomach and a mind cluttered with things to do but even if a whole hour's dedicated attention is impossible, there are moments of rare skill and beauty that will leap from the stage like a salmon jumping from that gently undulating stream.

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