Cause and effect in world of memory

DANCE
Ripple Effect
Link Dance Company
Dolphin Theatre
Review: All Tautbut

Link rounded off another successful year with this lively double bill of choreography from Craig Bary and Michael Whaites.

Caused To Happen was an unassuming exploration by Bary of cause and effect through three loosely related narratives. Against a backdrop of simple projections, the push and pull of family life, jealousies and the good intentions of parents were brought to life through Bary’s inventive and fluid choreography. Anchored around, below and beside the kitchen table and chairs, domestic emotions simmered.

A young couple grappled on a bed, at first in the joy of harmonious physicality and then with jarring awkwardness, as their symbiosis unravelled.

The most haunting thread was that of the schoolgirl clique and its collective bullying.

The pose moved languidly in the union of aribe, playing out the essential rituals of school life, which included stamping its authority on the odd one out.

Things That Remain, choreographed by Michael Whaites, was billed as a “snapshot of the things that get left behind” and was much more than pure dance. Loose paper covered the stage throughout the piece and an ever-moving, evolving projection of images played against the backdrop.

Guest performer, actor George Shevtsov, slowly built himself an armchair made of paper reams while the dance ensemble moved hypnotically in tai chi-style repetition.

This was a multi-sensory experience, not that all theatre isn’t in some way, but seeing barefoot dancers moving over loose paper sheets and hearing that paper rustle as it was kicked, thrown and rolled upon added to the aesthetic.

The constant juxtaposition of film projection and live dance provoked occasional anxiety about where to focus but was not detrimental to the overall effectiveness of the design.

Whaites varied the pace skilfully; each section sliding smoothly on to the next. There was the tongue-in-cheek humour of the ensemble playing off each other in the military march and the Latin dance class and later the moving evocation of Hiroshima victims and the chilling words of journalist Wilfred Burchett, “I write this as a warning to the world”.

The dancing was great but it is memories of the staging and design of Whaites’ piece that will remain.