

VALERIE GREEN/DANCE ENTROPY

June 5, 2017

Voices echo through St Mark's Church as the audience enters and chooses which side of the stage they wish to view the evening's work. Dancers from Valerie Green/Dance Entropy litter the space off stage, saying unimportant phrases as they move their colored felt pieces around the floor to step on.

Reminiscent of 'The Floor is Lava Game' played by children, the dancers create their own movement area while moving onto the stage floor. The conceptual thesis developed in the work's title "Impermanent Landscape" rushes to the forefront in this choreographic exploration. Once the whimsical, dinging music starts and the dancers begin to move more energetically, the piece picks up.

Brief explorations of changing spaces fill the rest of the evening, accompanied by sharp and bold choreography. Stepping through moving legs, touching, building pathways with bodies are all ways that the dancers draw new spaces into the blank wooden floor.

Off-center or firmly planted, the landscapes of the body was whimsically manipulated over the course of each new phrase of movement. The charismatic performers and electricity that filled the church created an engaging work, but levels of mental engagement were not enough for Green who engaged the audience by asking the everyone to switch their seats and view the dance from new angles. Though an interesting take on malleable landscapes, having the audience change seats felt more flashy than integral to the work.

There were many awe-inducing sections that fell throughout the evening's work. The most outstanding section occurred when one dancer began to climb on, step through, and traverse the bodies of her fellow dancers. Catching a breath with each step, the audience was surprised by each fluid step, journeying the suspended dancer through the space. Kinetically satisfying arm motions carried across sections, hypnotized the viewer and smoothed over transitions clarified by the luminously brilliant lighting design.

As the piece concludes, the performers go their separate ways, some freezing and some rushing off the stage. Lights fade with the exception of one bright line. Lights fade while the final dancer walks the lighted pathway.

Green's decision to employ such cliché image to end her work was strange given her ability to form such strikingly memorable pictures. Despite the soft ending, "Impermanent Landscapes" strikes a chord, masterfully presenting beautiful images and a whirlwind of heart-racing moments.