

# Dance Review: Radio Play

By **RED50** 01-15-2009 ON THE SCENE

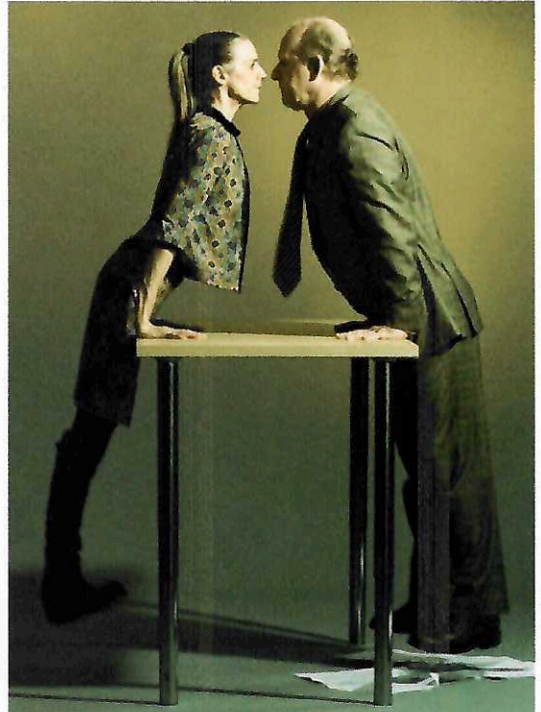
Bob Clark, Calgary Herald

Review: The 2009 One Yellow Rabbit High Performance Rodeo presents Radio Play at 8 p.m. on Jan. 15 at Theatre Junction Grand. Tickets: Ticketmaster.

Part dance, part theatre, Peggy Baker Dance Projects' Radio Play is all storytelling magic. Created by One Yellow Rabbit ensemble member and resident movement artist Denise Clarke - and this comic yet poignant work represents some of Clarke's most imaginative work to date as choreographer - Radio Play opened its two-night Rodeo run on Wednesday before a large crowd at Theatre Junction Grand.

The hour-long quasi-biographical show, performed by Canadian contemporary dance icon Peggy Baker and Vancouver-based director, writer and choreographer Conrad Alexandrowicz, offers a very engaging take on the modern dilemma of lives lived out of necessity rather than choice, and its corollary -the leading of double lives that don't run parallel, but don't seem to quite intersect, either.

Baker's character is an aging modern dancer of some renown who realizes she's been listening to her life as if played on a radio, and then sets out to face the frustrating prospect of having to find a day job without the requisite qualifications. Alexandrowicz plays the part of the unhappy bureaucratic drone who is suddenly confronted by her feelings of employment inadequacy and her existential angst.



So there we have it: Two lonely people - one mistakenly seeking a new life and the other unaware of dissatisfaction with the life he has - with only a table between them to eventually bring them together as they move around it on the grid defined by the squared-off shadows of Lee Anholt's lighting design.

Clarke's ingenious choreographic conceit is to create dance that sometimes attaches a descriptive inner voice and meaning to what is being said in the voice-overs used in most of the narrative dialogue. At other times, the dance mimes Richard McDowell's wonderfully rich sound design score. Or the dance is there simply to show off Baker's ability to move with a fluidity that is as sharply defined as it is emotionally expressive - as in the extended solo sequence where Baker's Marnie feels called upon to show her prowess as a dancer before proving she still has what it takes to do the requested "splits."

Here and elsewhere throughout Clarke's piece, the performance by Baker serves to remind us of just what great artistry is - and how well it can be displayed in a work as good as this.