

STAGE **DANCE REVIEWS**

He:She

Bravo Baker
By KATHLEEN SMITH

HE:SHE choreography by Peggy Baker and Paul-André Fortier (Peggy Baker Dance Projects). At Betty Oliphant (404 Jarvis). To April 6. \$23-\$28. peggybakerdance.com. [See listings.](#)

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Andrea Nann and Sean Ling pair up for the introspective yet expansive Aleatoric Duet No. 2.

In he:she, a mixed program dedicated to an exploration of dualities, Peggy Baker Dance Projects crafts choreographic worlds that are precise and evocative.

The 90-minute program opens with dancers Sean Ling and Andrea Nann in Aleatoric Duet No. 2. The moody work – part of a series in which dancers mine Baker’s rich legacy of movement vocabulary, then make it their own – introduces the evening’s defining elements: the stark solemnity of the performance space (impeccably enhanced by the work of lighting designer Marc Parent), onstage musicianship (in the opening duet, composer John Kameel Farah improvising from a perch high on the back wall of the stage overlooking the dancers), Baker’s alternately introspective and expansive movement vocabulary and, most of all, rigour and attention to detail.

Sylvan Quartet is a dance for performer (Baker originated the role in 1998) and three musicians that laments the destruction of the natural world. Here Sahara Morimoto leaps, runs and sometimes just stands still, responding to colleagues Farah on piano, Max Christie on clarinet and Shauna Rolston on cello, with charm and focus.

More severe, and yet with a delicate whiff of underlying humour, is Box, la femme au carton, a solo created in 2011 by Paul-André Fortier for Baker. She performs it here, a trippy interaction with a simple cardboard box that assumes totemic power from her slow-moving attention. Very little seems to happen, but the artists suggest a universe of narrative possibilities.

A new work by Baker closes the program. Performed by Ling, Ric Brown, Mateo Galindo Torres and cellist Rolston, stone leaf shell skin begins with a tight and exuberant circle of movement and ends with the dancers prostrate on the floor.

Program notes point to the work of photographer Edward Weston, another artist renowned for beautifully crafted and elegant juxtapositions of real and imagined worlds. Apt.