

# Going round in circles

Spinning dancers drive audience dizzy with bewilderment

## THEATRE

BACK UP/Compagnie Sisyphes Heureux  
Drama Centre Theatre/Last Saturday

June Cheong

**B**ACK Up corners its audience into an uncomfortably long staring match before the performance even begins.

The four dancers sit in a row clutching portable stereos and staring out into the audience blankly.

After five nervy minutes of mutual eyeing between the audience and the dancers, the latter look away nonchalantly and turn on their stereos.

A cacophony of music washes over the theatre – a relief from the awkward silence before.

The synthesised beats of 1980s pop from one dancer's stereo fight to be heard over Judy Garland's beautiful rendition of Somewhere Over The Rainbow from another's.

The four pieces form a jarring symphony and the audience finds itself tuning into the sweeping beauty of the whole as well as the individual pieces.

Likewise, the dancers in their bland business suits stand together as an indistinguishable mass of grey before breaking up into solos.

Compagnie Sisyphes Heureux is a multi-disciplinary contemporary dance company from France, and is named after the last line of Albert Camus' 1942 essay *The Myth Of Sisyphus* where he writes that Sisyphus should be thought of as a happy man.

Choreographer Haim Adri emphasises each performer's individuality by pushing the dancers towards improvised movements.

The three male dancers disperse themselves across the stage with one crawling around the periphery with his stereo and two others leaping and falling over themselves repeatedly.

Meanwhile, the female dancer stands motionless, languidly emptying her pockets of egg-shaped pebbles. Later, she arranges them in a circle and begins spinning within it, first slowly and rhythmically and then in a frenzied manner.

Her dizzying solo is accompanied by her continuous pointing at different parts of her body with her index fingers.

Like the dancer, the audience is enthralled as well as entrapped by the circles she turns.

Her repetitive steps of turns and pointing highlight her physical being and allude to the marks which her environment has wrought on her body.

But just as it was torturous to spin continuously for 10 minutes, the audience was alienated by the dancers' self-absorption. Their bewilderment was perhaps calculated by Haim to trigger within them questions of society and self, but the estrangement confused rather than challenged audiences.

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Quick, pass me the Dramamine!