

# THE IRISH TIMES

Tuesday, November 16, 2010

## **Cold Dream Colour -a Dance Homage to Louis le Brocquy**

Pavilion Theatre, Dún Laoghaire

MICHAEL SEAVER

Although it is billed as a dance homage to Louis le Brocquy, *Cold Dream Colour* refused to be a moving representation of static canvases. The first moments made it clear that this would be more than a visual experience: in darkness, the sound of softly padding footsteps crescendoed to breathy running until the dim light revealed a solitary figure, the butoh dancer Oguri, framed by partly parted curtains.

This was a homage to le Brocquy the artist rather than le Brocquy the painter. Rather than “bringing the paintings to life” it offered a deeply embodied reflection of the complex layers of meaning in his visual imagery, particularly his use of tone and texture.

That’s not to say there weren’t specific references to individual paintings – some images were too strong to ignore – but the choreographic team of Morleigh Steinberg, Oguri and Liz Roche seemed more concerned with harnessing the energy within the paintings than with surface shapes. That was left to the subtle lighting design, which was an equal partner to the movement, with lights irregularly criss-crossing the floor to evoke textured layers of paint and a restricted palette of warm straw and steely-grey colours that reflected the artist’s “grey period”. Similarly, the

soundscore by Feltlike with Paul Chavez and The Edge was sympathetic to the tonal changes onstage, from broad strokes of electro-atmospherics to precise dabs of timbre that matched the movement or primal percussion that broodingly bubbled under. Grant McLay, Katherine O’Malley, Cat Westwood and Roxanne Steinberg joined the choreographers onstage in an admirably concentrated, sustained performance.

Any re-evaluation of an artist like le Brocquy runs the risk of being so seduced by the craft that it loses sight of the beauty. *Cold Dream Colour* magnifies the sense of beauty, paradoxically by not trying to kinetically airbrush out the darkness within his canvases. Instead the dance celebrates his humanity to produce a reading that encourages a renewed examination of the paintings and a fresh glance at the ever-constant tension between individual and community, coalescence and fragmentation.