



Review: National Dance Company Wales at Sherman Cymru, Cardiff

The company is performing a triple bill of dance as part of its latest tour

The relationship between Stephen Petronio and National Dance Company Wales is again manifested this season with the return of his ensemble work *Water Stories*.

This dance was already seen as part of NDCWales' 30th anniversary, which saw the loss of first Roy Campbell-Moore and then artistic director Ann Sholem, ending the year with a black cloud over the company that they had created.

However, it remained the highlight of this triple bill with its fluid dance, eloquent and elegant, set against a backdrop of the rivers, lakes and coast of Wales, to music by Atticus Rose.

Dressed by H Petal, these water nymphs and river gods move across the Kenneth Tabachnick videos and photographs in a carefully constructed choreography rich in Petronio's language of pristine individual detail and beguiling interaction.

Petronio's previous work, *By Singing Light*, remains his triumph and probably NDCWales' own zenith, but this dance still shows what this company is capable of with a choreographer that creates magic.

The evening opened with another NDCWales' old favourite Stephen Shropshire who brings a work that is sharp and demands almost mechanical accuracy from the dancers.

Mythology builds from movement focused on individual dancer, to twos and threes until the whole 10-strong ensemble form synchronised patterns.

In their simple white shirts and shorts, the men and women dancers become almost characterless inmates of some sort of prison with grinding repetition of spoken and finally screamed text in a piece of music matched in the repeated movement.

In between we had Lee Johnston's *They Seek to Find the Happiness they Seem* which is the most accessible choreography with a 13 minute semi narrative of a couple who move from apparent closeness to dancing apart and while they may have bodily contact their faces are usually looking in different direction.

Matteo Marfoggia and Natalie Corne splendidly dance to the music of Max Richter in a charming dance, simply and effectively lit, moving from intimacy to solo circles of light. A well-constructed evening, contrasting choreographic styles and ensemble work with an engaging duet.

A unifying element is the clear dedication of these athletic, energy-filled dancers and while the loss of some of the company's particularly strong female dancers is felt it is in the nature of this company that the young talent will be developed by whoever fills the Campbell-Moore/Sholem dancing shoes.