



Human Landscape Dance

Human Landscape Dance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in the District of Columbia. Our mission is to promote the appreciation and understanding of contemporary dance. Our organization develops national and international cultural exchanges through shared performances, education, and dance videos.



ellen rosenberg photography





Press

Human Landscape Dance is on Washington DC's
"...Dream Team of local troupes...."

—The Washington Post

"...Human Landscape Dance explored the underbelly of
myths and folk tales with ingenious choreography and
staging by founder Malcolm Shute."

—The Washington Post

"...it is pitch-perfect and an element of humor and
suspense is subtly added..."

—The Philadelphia Inquirer

"Shute emphasized the physicality of Cinderella's labor,
while Szegda got to wear the ball gown and go to the ball
with Alexander Short, her prince."

—CriticalDance

"...intimacy is a trademark of Shute's choreography."

—Gazette.net



Diverse paths in dance converge: Crossing Paths Movement Collective presents its Philly première

Broad Street Review

By Melissa Strong, Published Mar 21, 2022

Choreography and connection

Shute's *Cascade* and *Personal Space* were highlights. Pairing contact choreography with gesture, they were performed at a slow pace with constant movement for an effect both visually captivating and evocative. The movement suggested interdependence as well as Covid-era cravings for human connection.

In *Cascade*, set to Albinoni's "Adagio in G Minor," Susan Donham, Roxann Morgan Rowley, Alexander Short, and Shute formed a kinetic shape that was part human pyramid, part nesting doll as their bodies folded into and rested upon each other. Clad in black tops and bottoms spattered with white paint, the dancers leaned on one another, supported each other's bodies, and reached hands to each other's shoulders and cheeks in gestures of caring, support, and solidarity. As these constantly shifted, they effectively captured the ever-evolving dynamics of human relationships and the necessity of giving and receiving.

In *Personal Space*, Katie Sopoci Drake and Shute performed a duet with similar features while sitting, lying, balancing, and moving together on a table. The dancers maintained contact between their bodies as they shifted positions and bore each other's weight. *Personal Space* delved even deeper into relationships as it depicted the sensual and romantic aspects of human intimacy.





Review: Human Landscape Dance and Code f.a.d. Company at Dance Place *The Washington Post*

By Pamela Squires, Published December 9, 2012

The pairing of two companies on different levels was in-your-face clear Saturday at Dance Place. Local company Human Landscape Dance explored the underbelly of myths and folk tales with ingenious choreography and staging by founder Malcolm Shute. In comparison, Raleigh, N.C.-based Code f.a.d. Company's exploration of fashion designers as new gods killed an interesting theme with banal choreography.

Human Landscape Dance is grounded in contact improvisation. Shute put this to good use in "Aurora's Dream," which revealed what Sleeping Beauty was dreaming about all those years. The dream looked a cross between Disneyland and Hieronymus Bosch. The prince was a deviant for having crept into her bedroom. Bad fairies threatened her safety.

In a separate piece, Amanda Abrams was brilliant as the long-suffering Penelope weaving away as she waited years for her husband, Odysseus, to return. For most of "Penelope and Odysseus/Waiting," Abrams remained in a chair, almost magically defying the limits of scale and reach that this imposed. Her arms spoke volumes. In her hands, repetition became a powerful force. What a riveting mover she was.

Shute's final tour de force was the disembodied head of Medusa, performed by Heather Doyle, using eyes, eyebrows and soundlessly moving mouth to convey wonderment at all that she no longer had to bother with now, like painting her toenails. It was delightfully humorous and weird.





Review: Spacetime Dance & Human Landscape Dance in 'Topographies: Dance for Land, Air, and Water'

Dance Metro DC

By Val Oliphant, Published November 17, 2018

Katie Sopoci Drake's contemporary dance style and Malcolm Shute's contact choreography intertwined in an exploration of how we interact with our built and natural environments on Saturday evening at the Dance Loft on 14. The performance ping-ponged between pieces by the two choreographers performed by their respective dance companies, Spacetime Dance and Human Landscape Dance, and culminating in an intimate duet between them.

Shute's first piece, "*Tsuru no Ongaeshi* (Crane)," retold a Japanese myth about a crane who turns herself human after falling in love with a farmer. Olivia Serrill, dressed in white, began kneeling on the floor. She dove her torso forward, revealing a man dressed all in black, Alexander Shute, directly behind her. Stitch by stitch, she sewed her arm to his and together they moved as one, arms fluidly flapping. They tumbled over one another without ever losing their physical connection.

As the storm surged in "Crossing," four dancers clad in bright green quietly rolled to the back corner of the stage. "Moss" looked at the transition from life to death, through the parasitic relationship of moss and grass in a Japanese garden. Two couples rolled on top of one another, demonstrating codependency and intimacy akin to young lovers as they cartwheeled, backbended, and contorted over and around each other.

The evening ended with Shute's beautiful but thematically incongruent duet, "Eurydice," danced by Drake and Shute. I couldn't figure out how this classic Greek myth fit into the narrative of the rest of the show. In the final moment, Eurydice grabbed her husband's face and forced him to look her in the eye, the first moment they have made eye contact the entire dance. As he does a double-take, a look of awe and longing flashed across his face — it was a truly touching moment. In a world where many are glued to their devices, we are losing our ability to fully see and connect with what is around us. While not the message of the original myth, it was the perfect ending note for the show.





Press

Preview: A Dream Team for Contemporary Dance

The Washington Post

By Rebecca Ritzel, Published Dec 29, 2013

Human Landscape Dance: The company: “We are an experimental dance troupe,” says member Malcolm Shute. We often take familiar stories and deconstruct them, making substitutions and exposing glitches that show the work in a new light.”

The work: Usually, if you’re seeing “Cinderella” in dance, you’re seeing a ballet. This abstract version of the fairy tale will feature both male and female Cinderellas, asking pointed questions about which gender should be home scrubbing the floors.

What’s next? The company is planning a Central American tour for May and is at work creating dances to be filmed and released online.



Review: Modern Moves Festival

CriticalDance

By Carmel Morgan, published Jan 15, 2014

Presenting a new take on Cinderella was Human Landscape Dance’s piece by the same name. Malcolm Shute, the choreographer, in a clever twist, shared the role of Cinderella with Mary Szegda. Shute emphasized the physicality of Cinderella’s labor, while Szegda got to wear the ball gown and go to the ball with Alexander Short, her prince. In the beginning, in a section called “Broom,” Shute’s long hair practically swept the floor as he swung like a pendulum in the grip of Short, who before becoming the prince, took the role of Mother. Instead of offering a coherent narrative, Human Landscape Dance’s Cinderella seemed aimed to provoke dialogue about gender roles in its deconstructed version of the classic storybook tale.