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DANCE REVIEWS : Chiao-Ping Expressive at Women's Fest

May 31, 1993



Dance Review

## Mind-Opening Performance at Highways

November 07, 1998 | Victoria Looseleaf

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Leave it to butoh master Oguri to astonish, terrify and enlighten. The small space at Highways in Santa Monica became a canvas Thursday night on which the performer painted an extraordinary picture of humankind in a devastating 50-minute solo, "thestreamofconsciousness (a century)."

With his malleable face powdered a chalky white, his eyes outlined in a brown resembling dried blood, Oguri nudged us toward 2000 as he morphed from concentration camp victim to ape-like creature; vulnerable newborn to open-mouthed warrior. A taped sound collage of shattering glass, incessant chanting, cleansing raindrops and, finally, a searingly redemptive, prolonged syncopated flamenco wail accompanied his gravity-defying movements: an impossibly bent knee, dangling arms, a quivering foot and the head tilting backward until it stares at us upside down, challenging our very notion of reality.

Discomfiting? Agonizing? Absolutely. But then trust Oguri to open our minds, leading us on an electrifying, unforgettable journey of pain and its near-healing consequences.

The evening began with Li Chiao-Ping Dance, a good-looking local company possessing athletic resources. Choreographer-dancer Chiao-Ping performed a beautiful solo, "Re:Joyce," a tribute to her hard-working laundress mother. Combining film and spoken word, the sturdy Chiao-Ping brought muscular grace to this poignant tale of immigration through crisply articulated hand and footwork.

"Fin de Siecle, Parts I and II" saw the company--Emily Blacik, Walter Dundervill, Valerie Hollnagel, Yunchen Liu and Chiao-Ping--create a whimsical world in which mechanized movements gave way to elbow stands, push-ups and strong unison leaps and turns. Elizabeth Prince's quirky costumes--snoods and velvet leggings--contributed to the imaginative scenario.

\* Oguri and Li Chiao-Ping, tonight and Sunday, 8:30 p.m., Highways, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica. \$15. (310) 453-1755.

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