

FESTIVAL ANTIGONISH

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Undone! has a great run at FAST

By Andrea Nemetz • Halifax Herald • July 22, 2005

Undone! is a **totally unique, wickedly funny and thoroughly delightful** look at the world of dance and modern motherhood.

Conceived and choreographed by Halifax dancer/teacher Veronique MacKenzie, the 35-minute show, which wrapped up a four-night run in the Festival Antigonish late night series on Friday, July 22, is **physical comedy at its best.**

MacKenzie begins by parodying American dance legend Martha Graham, noting in the program she "was trained in the Graham technique and presents (the number) with utmost love!"

A crackly voiceover - taken from the 1957 soundtrack Martha Graham in Performance - has the modern dance great intoning that "dance is communication" and "to speak clearly you must transform yourself into the character you want to play."

The look on MacKenzie's face is **priceless** as she dons a giant Japanese-style wig pierced by a two-foot twig on which is perched a stuffed bird. Her movements are rigid, with **overdramatic** hand gestures, and **exaggerated** feet pointing - effectively portraying all the negative stereotypes of modern dance.

Without leaving the stage, the lithe MacKenzie quickly slides into a new character for Resistance is Futile, an ironic look at one woman's life. It begins with a bespectacled student wearing a mortarboard with the words "student loan" emblazoned on top typing madly to a metronome while trying to ignore any number of distractions including the cellphone strapped to her chest. As she swings into The Doris Day Hit Singles Collection, she is shackled by a giant "diamond-tinsel" ring to a tuxedo-clad blow-up doll and spins around the stage in a daze wrapped in a coil of giant Viagra, SOS pads, and blow-up babies. Life as a homemaker here is clearly not the blissful idyll portrayed in '50s TV shows as shown by the signs reading mortgages and car payments, followed by the burdens of bills, tax audits and disconnection notices.

But she triumphs emerging as Wonderwoman, complete with sword, to take on the world, before becoming Vitorio Marcello Bomenio, aging, mustachioed star of the classical ballet world.

As a faux-British announcer breathlessly describes the spectacle fans are about to witness, "Vitorio" gives a hyper-melodramatic performance of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, complete with a groin-wrenching split (first aid in the form of Keith's beer is enthusiastically applied) and an ode to Anna Pavlova (or a blow-up version of the famed ballerina who is forever associated with the dying swan to which Vitorio plays homage.)



Veronique MacKenzie

The final transformation brings MacKenzie back to the hilariously harried housewife - in this case a mother with a baby literally hanging off every limb struggling to "Relax with Reveen."

MacKenzie's skill as a physical performer is evident in the laughs she wrings out of every wiggle of her toes, every wrinkle of her expressive nose.

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