

Surakarta, Java: Solo International Performing Arts 2011

The Diversity in Glorious Mask

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Koreografi untuk "Lost, Found, Lost" (by: Arni)

“Excuse me, *Permisi, Maaf.* I’ve lost my mind. Have you seen my mind?”

The question was quite tickled when delivered by Janis Brenner, an artist from New York in the third work, titled "Lost, Found, Lost" at the Solo International Performing Arts complex in Mangkunegaran Palace, Surakarta. For me who is an amateur connoisseur of art, performances of choreographer, dancer, singer, teacher all at the same time, Janis Brenner & Dancers gives the most captivating performances of all on the first night of this international dance festival. Starting with the question "I've lost my ticket. Have you seen my ticket?" to the question "I've lost my virginity. Have you seen my virginity?" describes the travesty that occurs in human life. It brought the audience's attention into a state of "WOW" from the beginning of her performance until the end of it! What is unique, the audience never felt tired watching these modern dancers performing Brenner's stunning choreography.

I've fallen in love with Brenner since the first appearance of the two dancers in the very graceful dance number titled "The Awkward Stage" which tells of two lovers who are in love to a song accompanied by Mozart. A very interesting part of this performance is the dancers' abilities, which is explored to the limit by Brenner: from the moonwalk, ballet with only socks on a carpeted stage, and curvaceous bodies that are similar to the classical Javanese dance. You could say this performance highlights the very motion of ballet that is free. Spectators were not allowed to fall asleep only with the first appearance, as a pair of dancers in the second work Brenner tells the story of "Pieces of Trust" which shows a completely different aspect from the first work. A dance that describes the lack of success in their relationship that has been forged over a long time is completely different from the one before in terms of the type of movement. Although likewise showing the body's flexibility, this second dance looks different from ballet and is more akin towards free-style dance albeit more rigid.

The third appearance was followed by about eight dancers on the stage taking turns performing and at the end they all performed together. "Lost, Found, Lost": for me it describes a parody of human life. With a very philosophical theme, this dance is able to build a strong story where people are confused when they lose something and find something. How to make the audience understand the story of dance that is presented only through the movement has been made into something interesting. This performance proves one thing: dance *is* a universal language.