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## Spellbound x 2

review dance

REDOUBLED

Singapore Dance Theatre  
Esplanade Theatre Studio, Wednesday

tara tan

The Singapore Dance Theatre (SDT) does not often perform in intimate black box spaces, but judging from the visceral performances in this double bill, it should.

Kuik Swee Boon's *Pellucid*, the evening's second piece, was akin to cradling soft, warm rays of morning light: utterly gorgeous in its simplicity, sophisticated in its subtlety.

It began with a sole dancer on a small white mat placed at the corner of the stage. Chihiro Uchida was an absolute vision: Her frame delicate yet volatile, she danced with a vulnerable defiance.

Lit by a single lamp above her head, she moved with a quiet and playful unre-

servedness, rolling her torso or placing her feet against the wall.

Later, she coiled in and out of embraces in a pas de deux with Robert Mills, their entwined figures casting smoky shadows on a white screen behind.

With the ingenious use of a single spotlight swung by a dancer around the space, Kuik conveyed the vision of a dark, gaping universe.

Uchida ran along the walls, her palms outstretched to grab something but finding nothing. She leaned against the wall, desolate, contemplating her existence.

I was spellbound by this poignant piece. It was one of those magical experiences in the theatre one yearns for: where one walks out with a lump in the throat and that slight out-of-worldly sensation.

The piece highlighted Kuik's talent as one of the strongest choreographers in local contemporary dance.

Jeffrey Tan's *Sometimes I Think I Remember* wandered into the realms of



The performers took spiteful swipes at each other in the vengeful lovers' spat in Jeffrey Tan's *Sometimes I Think I Remember*. PHOTO: ESPLANADE

the theatrical.

It had arresting visual images: A dancer enveloped himself, and contorted, in a white, lycra cocoon. Propelled by the momentum of a wooden swing, he glided in circles with toes touching the ground.

Soloist William Wu moved sinuously but with precise control. Yearning and urgent, he was a bundle of conflicted emotions.

The work – Tan's first experimental piece and the first time he worked with text – had interesting results but it felt at times like a work-in-progress.

Recorded text was injected into the scenes: The poetic prose sometimes worked, turning the scene into an unusual hybrid art where text and movement were one.

At other times, it was distracting and unnecessary, such as in the scene with the lovers' spat on the sofa.

But what Tan is best at is his mating of the music with his choreography. Although not always graceful, the dancers moved with quirk and to the precise convulsions of the avant-garde soundtrack, from the wail of the viola to the abrupt electronic contortions.

ReDoubled proved that SDT has the talent, strength and prowess for contemporary dance pieces. I beseech more.