

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

by Tan Hui Leng

Whose Voice Cries Out?

AS CORSETTED dancers dangled in mid-air just minutes into Saturday's performance of *Whose Voice Cries Out?*, it was tempting to wonder if the Singapore Dance Theatre's joint effort with Japanese choreographer Sakiko Oshima was meant to be as much of a crowd-pleaser as it is a work of artistic expression.

Either way, the performance's world premiere was a wonder to behold, nimbly



COURTESY OF STEVEN TOR

FINDING AN EQUILIBRIUM: The production blurs the line between trick and technique, reality and illusion, the real and the ideal.

tracing the contrasts between black and white, heaven and earth, and the real and the unreal.

In a world where people risk losing themselves in the quasi-realities of the Internet and other technologies, *Whose Voice Cries Out?* suggests that black-and-white notions of human selfhood have given way to a shade of grey where everyone's identity exists in limbo.

Reinforcing this theme, dancers trained to give the illusion of weightlessness skim across the stage during the performance — supported by nothing more than wires — blurring the line between trick and technique, reality and illusion.

Sometimes euphoric, sometimes dark, *Whose Voice Cries Out?* stands as a reminder of the absurdity of everyday life, juxtapos-

ing familiar repetitive motions such as hands on an imaginary typewriter with the sound of screams and heavy breathing.

The production suggests that we all walk a tightrope between the real and the ideal and it intensifies this theme through the use of grey throughout. After all, nothing is absolute.

In its exploration of these decidedly abstract themes, *Whose Voice Cries Out?* threatens to sink into self-indulgence at times but somehow manages to stay just on this side of that slippery slope.

In the end, the production seems to suggest that modern life calls upon all of us to find a similar equilibrium.