

Susan Broili Arts

Everything that moves

Compelling

June 11, 2017 susanbroiliarts[Leave a comment](#)

A REVIEW

By SUSAN BROILI

RAD | Renay Aumiller Dances' premiere of Aumiller's "boneglow" Friday (June 2) at Durham's Living Arts Collective offered a compelling, thought-provoking theater experience created with and performed by accomplished dancers Nicole Lawson, Rachel Mehaffey, Lucas Melfi and Allie Pfeffer. Other gifted artists also contributed their expertise to this fully-realized work: Daniel "Tebo" Thibault's lighting design; artist Mary Catherine Floyd's pendulum creations; music by Son Lux and Dave Yarwood as well as Aumiller's own, deceptively simple treatment of the back wall, which she covered with black paper.

"boneglow" opened with Allie Pfeffer's solo that began with standing motionless except for occasional, small, quick twitches and slight shifts of her shoulders that suggested that her body and mind were preparing to help her express the ultimate, creative, human physical activity known as dance. When she did move, accompanied by the sound of her exhalations, she leaned way back and forward in various ways and sat on her legs, arms by her sides as she leaned forward, looked down and whipped her head from side-to-side.

A clanging sound signaled change as we heard the Son Lux performance of Ryan Lott's "Change is Everything" that opens with: "This moment changes everything. The course of blood within your veins, a stranger's form, your skeleton. See the bones glow as they break free."

In a foreshadowing of what intensified later in this work, a dancer sent a pendulum swaying. (The four pendulums, attached to long cords, were suspended about 18 inches above the stage.)

In dim light, dancers in pairs supported each other. One woman cupped her hands underneath the head of another woman who had her feet planted on the floor, her body catilevered in a horizontal position as they moved backwards as one.

In another unusual paring of two women, one stood on the thighs of the other, who sat on her legs. Together, they moved clockwise as the seated dancer slowly turned in a tight circle.

Harmony faded as three dancers formed a barrier that Rachel Mehaffey tried repeatedly to scale.

The mood shifted to a meditative one as dancers stood together, faces slightly downcast, eyes closed, as their chests moved slightly to signal their slowed-down breathing.

A sense of danger and risk ensued as the four dancers interacted, with increasing daring, with the four pendulums. At one point, a dancer put so much force into her push that the pendulum caused at least one front row audience member (me) to feel a shrinking sensation inside. While my mind knew that that Aumiller had carefully calculated the arc of this pendulum's extreme path, my primitive brain sensed a threat and went into fright or flight mode.

The most riveting section in this work occurred when dancers, on the floor, had to twist and turn their bodies to avoid being hit by pendulums swinging very close above them.

They met this challenge and then, we heard a hopeful message in lyrics from Son Lux' recording of "Your Day Will Come" : "From deep inside you, your day will come."

In "boneglow," that day began when Rachel Mehaffey released one pendulum from its tether, held it against her chest, then walked upstage to the black paper-covered wall, reared back with both hands on the pendulum, lunged forward and with the pendulum's point slashed through the black paper. She was soon joined by the other three dancers, who did the same, as Son Lux continued their song: "Open your ears and tell me what you hear."

And, I thought: "I hear the sound of change for the better" as star bursts of light shone through the backdrop's slashed openings and cast pale, aurora borealis-type patterns and abstract blue and red rays on the stage floor in this truly transcendent ending.

Out of This World

May 9, 2017 *May 10, 2017* [*susanbroiliarts*](#) [*Leave a comment*](#)

A Review

By Susan Broili

When Luke Selden welcomed the audience back to Earth, that's exactly how it felt after seeing the hour-long "The Mesoplanets" Saturday (May 6) at the Living Arts Collective.

It was truly an out-of-this-world experience.

Presented by the creative collective Rabble & Twine, founded by Luke Selden and Anna Seagrave, the one-night-only premiere was part of Durham Independent Dance Artists' 2016-2017 season.