



I Thought She Was Kidding About Murder

posted by Wendy Perron on Friday, Jun 25, 2010

During the audience participation, Pat Catterson's voice on tape asked us, "Have you changed the distance between your shoulders during this performance?" After a gentle litany of those kinds of questions, we heard, "Do you think you could ever murder someone?"

I thought she snuck that zinger in just for theatrical "contrast." But actually, that's what this piece was about. It was quite shocking, because first of all, there were several ways that Pat had drawn us into the performance—reading aloud, holding a rose, closing our eyes when asked. So when we started hearing her voice read her email messages, we were already very involved. Secondly, Pat's voice on tape is calm and mellifluous, and the question about murder was said in the same calm, almost nurturing tone.

As Pat's voice recited the messages she'd received from a single person, we realized she was talking about someone she was very friendly with, someone who was funny and charming and cared about Pat. And then we heard her read from a local Florida paper that this friend had stabbed her girlfriend many times and then shot herself.

You gotta admire the skill of a choreographer who can just weave that sort of info into the text, and into the choreography. Nothing, literal in the movement, of course, though the four dancers posed in little tableaux with a rose and a knife (which reminded me of Grahams' *Deaths and Entrances*). You gotta marvel at the fact that those email messages gave not one shred of foreshadowing of what this woman was about to do. And you gotta sympathize that after that, Pat may feel the necessity to ask everyone she meets, Do you think you could murder someone?

Anyway, the piece is on again Saturday night. It's called *There Is No Conclusion*, and the place is Judson Church (where Pat choreographed her first piece 40 years and 100 dances ago). It also is a chance to hear "Nothing" by the Fugs, which you don't hear too much any more.