

Speaking Vibrations: Audio Preshow Note

Transcript

Welcome, this is the audio pre-show note for “Speaking Vibrations,” a co-creation by Jo-Anne Bryan, Carmelle Cachero, King Kimbit & Jordan Samonas, working under the creative direction of Jacqui du Toit and Pamela Witcher. My name is Jacqui, and I will be your describer for this performance.

These introductory notes will last approximately 6 minutes and will include descriptions of the theatre, set, costumes and performers. This is an inclusive multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory experience using ASL song and poetry, music, rhythm tap and dance.

(You are in the) ODD Box Theatre

The Ottawa Dance Directive’s Box Theatre, known as the ODD Box Theatre is a black box studio with a black matte finished floor. Black curtains travel along the three sides of the stage space, with the audience seating on the floor of the stage and risers. There are 6 rows with two aisles. There are 50 seats with the majority being bright yellow plastic seats. Additionally, for this performance, there are an additional two rows of two on the left and right of the stage, angled and are black plastic chairs and in the center are mats with cushions that I am welcome to sit on for the duration of the performance. Guests enter on the stage level at the first row before the risers on the right side of the room. The stage is on the right and the risers are on the left.

Lobby Signage and Event Advisories:

Regarding Vibrotactile devices: There will be 12-24 vibrotactile devices located on specific seats in the theatre. If you are pregnant, have a pacemaker, or have a medical condition that may be aggravated by intense vibration or magnets, do NOT use or sit in a seat that has a vibrotactile pillow.

Please note that there are themes and references to mental health, ableism, and racism in this performance. In one scene, performed in visual vernacular, the history of enslaved African peoples being trafficked is signed.

Setting

This play takes place in a storytelling world that brings together four women who each express their stories in their unique way, such as through ASL poetry, song and tap dance.

The Set

When we enter, the set is already in place. There is a light-coloured wooden floor that sits one inch above the black stage floor. The stage space is approximately 11 paces wide and 8 paces deep. At the back of the stage space is a large white screen that fills the full height of the space, approximately 6 paces wide and 18 ft high. In the center of the screen is a large black box about one arm length wide and deep. This is a subwoofer which vibrates the stage for the performers to feel the heartbeat sound effect and other amplified microphone moments in the piece. There are two small openings at the back that serve as entrance and exit points for the performers.

Performers

There are four performers in this performance. In order of appearance:

Jo-Anne Bryan is a Black, Barbadian woman who is of average height with her hair in a short fro. She wears a bright green Nigerian-style outfit, with a shirt that flows out from her waist, ending just past her hips. The wide sleeves extend outward just past her elbows. She wears matching green pants and brown lace-up shoes. She performs using ASL poetry and visual vernacular, which is a form of performance art that combines theatrical techniques, mime and sign language to convey emotions and stories.

Carmelle Cachero is a short, Filipina woman and has long black hair tucked away from her face. She wears a black long-sleeve shirt, red linen wide-legged pants and a matching malong, which is a tubular-like red fabric like a sash that extends across her left shoulder and ends past her right hip. Tied around her wrists are matching red fabric. She performs rhythm tap dance and body percussion.

King Kimbit is a short Vietnamese woman with her long black hair tied in a high bun. She wears a flowing dark blue Vietnamese-style robe inspired by the Nguyen Dynasty. And wears black ankle boots. King sings and offers spoken-word poetry.

Elizabeth is a white woman of French Canadian, English and Scottish descent and is of average height. She has olive skin and long brown hair, and wears a white draping grecian style fabric that forms a halter-like wrapped dress. In the piece, she uses contemporary dance and tap dance to communicate.

Projections

Later, this white screen will have nature scenes such as jellyfish floating in the ocean, hills, a burning campfire, and a forest, among other images. Additionally, there are open captions that will appear over top of the images translating the ASL signed poetry and song to written English or transcribing the spoken word to written English. The words

are presented in dynamic ways, sometimes moving like roots of a tree growing down into the soil, or floating and spiralling, or slowly scrolling up and down the screen in different computerized and handwritten fonts.

Vibrotactile Devices

The entire experience of the show is complemented by the vibrotactile devices on a majority of the seats. The devices are pillows. These devices vibrate based on the percussion that the performers make throughout the performance.

Dance and Movement

This piece blends together many different forms of movement and dance that are informed by the four women's lived histories and stories. They at times echo ASL and visual vernacular movements that echo the song or poetry King speaks, and other times flow abstractly, interpreting the rhythms and vibrations the others produce.

Key Handshapes and Signs

There are several repeated handshapes in the performance:

World/Whole being - which is created by holding both hands in front of your chest, palms facing each other, with your fingers curling around an imaginary dodgeball.

Storybook - Two hands, palms facing up, pressing pinkies together forming a V shape with hands, as if your palms are pages of a book.

Disconnected - which is created by the index and thumb pinching together, interlocking both the left and right fingers and then letting go, moving them apart to separate the fingers from each hand.

Heartbeat- which is created by holding the world hand shape of a ball in front, and squeezing to the beat of a heart. A heartbeat is also sometimes represented by one hand with a pointed index finger moving into the heartbeat onto the flat palm of the other hand.

Sound

The performers use headmics and microphones when speaking and also have shoe microphones to amplify their dance movements. These are amplified by speakers hung on either side of the stage.

This concludes the introductory notes. We hope you enjoy the show!