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ARTS & CULTURE

Air Tact Light

by **Nick Green**

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AIR TACT LIGHT, PAC/edge Performance Festival, at the Athenaeum Theatre. Logic conspires to make director Brian Torrey Scott's new performance piece, created by the ensemble on the basis of a framework he devised, as deadeningly formalistic as a John Cage work. Air Tact Light gains life only when the performers briefly and seemingly accidentally escape from Scott's elegantly conceived but cold Pirandellian prison, as when Donovan Sherman breaks into a wry, knowing smile or Meridith Crosley dances across Nicholas Monsour's stark set, complete with a grid of tape on the floor.

Wordless scenes that require the six performers to shuffle chairs around the stage make up the first part of the show; later scenes with dialogue involve guns and police officers, giving the piece a violent edge. Inexplicably, Scott drags a chair from the audience down to the edge of the stage midway through and inserts himself into the proceedings, whispering stage directions to the ensemble—and effectively alienating the audience completely. Scott seems to have a strong visual sense: this hour-long piece might have worked better as an installation. I caught portions of Sandra Binion's looped video installation, Watercloset(s), while in the men's room and came away with an appreciation of purpose I didn't get from Air Tact Light.

Performance might be calculated, but it should never be about exerting absolute control. Balled up in Scott's iron fist, this airless, precious piece feels like a cheat.



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