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***In My Body* at Flying Bulldog Productions**

Flying Bulldog Productions provided an immersive, positive and uplifting evening with their message of self-love in their production of *In My Body*. The world-premiere musical is a theatrical experience, combining different artistic mediums such as spoken-word poetry, song, and dance, to create one cohesive comment on the struggles we humans face with everything from body image to identity.

In My Body was first conceptualized here in Philadelphia by its three writers Lis Kalogris, Kate Cipriano, and Melissa Hays. It started as a multi-arts project that was conceived by Kalogris in 2010 that was set up like an exhibition of the body that also included a song cycle, with music by Dan Martin and lyrics by Michael Biello. This song cycle then became the basis for the development of the full stage musical that had its first staged reading at Christ Church Neighborhood House in Philadelphia in 2014. In 2015 there was then a five day workshop of the piece at The Arden Theater's Hamilton Arts Annex. The show has now finally come to having its world premiere with its creative team, Flying Bulldog Productions, at the Prince Theater in Philadelphia with this production. The ensemble of performers is composed of five brilliant actors simply labeled as Humans 1 through 5. Each performer represented many different characters throughout the show, showing of the incredible versatility of all of these artists.

Human 1 was played by Donnie Hammond, whose smooth vocals and beautiful smile instantly put me at ease when she walked onto stage. She made me laugh out loud during her fearless poem "Breasts!" and warmed my heart with her sincerity during the song "Perfect." Human 2 was played by the light-on-her-feet Katie Zaffrann. Zaffrann had a lovely soprano that tickled the ears throughout the show and effortlessly glided through the almost interpretative-style dances. She also had me on the edge of my seat with her intense rendition of "Holly and Hubby." The other half of that sobering piece was Michael Indeglio, who played Human 5. Indeglio also shined in the movement pieces, and had an incredibly endearing charisma throughout the show. Austin Ku played Human 3 and was an expert storyteller. He made me laugh and broke my heart with his piece "Big Feet," transporting me back into my own middle school shoes. Finally, Human 4 was played by the absolutely show-stopping April Woodall. Woodall had me under her spell from the very beginning of the show with her hilarious candidness in the number "Chewing." Her true spotlight moment was during the song "Annie Sprinkle," when she wowed me with unapologetic comedic bravado and an operatic finish that brought down the house.

A multi-arts piece like *In My Body* requires a strong leader to create a cohesive vision for the show, and Director Kathryn MacMillan did not disappoint on that front. The specific and skillful movement on stage was incredibly effective. This was also complimented by the thought-provoking choreography done by K.O. DelMarcelle, whose work made a captivating commentary on the body itself and how it can tell a story. The music played by the lovely orchestra, and led by Musical Director Chris Burcheri was fun and energizing, with everything from intense piano chords to bongo drums.

Delicate simplicity ran throughout the various designs of this production, effectively creating the pliable world needed for this piece. Melpomene Katakalos' scenic design featured panels with various pictures of nude bodies that nicely set the tone for the exposed nature of the show. These panels were also used for intriguing silhouettes, created by lighting designer Thom Weaver. Weaver did an exceptional job using his design to not only transport the story to different locations, but also change the mood in an instant. Alison Roberts created a colorful yet uncomplicated world with her costume design, keeping each actor in fairly neutral clothing that gave them the ability to create their multitude of characters for us. Larry D. Fowler Jr.'s sound design was perfectly balanced and smooth. Flora Vassar's props design had its own wink-and-a-smile to it with entertaining pieces like fully glittered lasagna.

In My Body was a beautiful artistic adventure that felt like a warm hug, so please go see Flying Bulldog Productions' superb production at Prince Theater!