

**“M.U.D.”: (“Men Under Dirt”)
Naked Male-to-Male Emotions, on Stage.**

“M.U.D.” (“Men Under Dirt”) is the new multi-dimensional performance piece by **Prismatic Productions** and **Ollom Movement Art**. The provocative new show was conceived, directed, and choreographed by Dancer/Choreographer/Professor of Ballet **John Ollom**. The sold-out production incorporates music, drama, dance, and even video (the short homoerotic film “Karpos and Kalamos”). “M.U.D.” is a delight for the eyes, ears, and-- as the audience soon learns-- our other senses as well, some of which the attendees of this show (*including this reviewer!*) may not have tapped into yet. No doubt, many theater aficionados would be intrigued by the show’s promotional artwork, with its promises of male nudity. Indeed, “M.U.D.” is simmering with sexuality, and will satisfy admirers of the male beauty in all its glory-- made more impressive by the athletic talents and dynamic movements of the attractive cast. However, the more provocative aspects of the piece-- intimacy between men -- come through to the audience as much as the visual delights of the well-toned male bodies. As creator John Ollom has pointed out, the main theme of “M.U.D.” is man-to-man love (as opposed to gay male sexuality alone), which still sadly remains under-explored in the world of theater.

The story begins in a way that can only be described as “the choreography of life”. Through Ollom’s vision, the opening Movement, “A Man of War”, makes the viewer realize that even ordinary, day-to-day life is something of a dance: a continuum, rich with fluidity. (*We speculate that life as we know it could possibly be more graceful if we could just learn to see things Ollom’s way!*) Set to music that conveys a million feelings without a single lyric, we look in on what appears to be an unhappy relationship. There’s a sad man, known only as “The Man/Kalamos” (played by Ollom), sitting at a table with his head in his hands. A wordless, equally forlorn-looking woman (“The Wife/Divine Feminine”, played by the amazing **Janet Aisawa**) enters. Things don’t stay “ordinary” for very long: The story goes from reality to fantasy as another character, a handsome man known as “The Lover” (**Paul Hays**), enters and proceeds to arouse some suppressed desires in The Man. We soon get the idea that our main protagonist may be dealing with repressed sexuality, and that those feelings are about to explode. They do. The audience is also introduced to The Internal Voice (“The Divine Masculine”, played to perfection by **Douglas Allen**), something of a angelic yet tough character who approvingly watches the two men and offers some philosophical insights as well. What happens next is an elaborate and seductive mating dance of sorts between The Man and The Lover-- an expression of primal and carnal desires mixed with the quest for an emotional connection. Just when we start to think that The Wife will remain silent throughout the entire piece, she “comes to life” in a big way, engaging in her own dramatic show of strength of wills against The Man. It’s at this time we get to see some of “M.U.D.”’s most astonishing, eye-popping choreography. In Movement 2, The Lover temporarily leaves the scenario, and another character, “The Shadow Self” (**Preston Burger**)-- complete with a seriously toned physique, a Caravaggio painting-inspired head of hair, and covered with mud-- is “birthed” by The Man. “M.U.D.” climaxes with four of the dancers engaging in an expertly executed sequence that can best be described as a Clash of the Titanesque personalities. It’s not difficult to understand why this final Movement was named “Integration”.

“M.U.D.” is far, far more than a performance piece about one man consummating his sexual desires. More complicated emotions are in place: possibly including jealousy, dominance, and passionate desire alongside equally passionate anger. The show is bolstered by the acting and dancing talents of all four characters, as well as some innovative, highly impressive dance sequences-- particularly a sequence involving the three male actors Ollom, Allen, and Burger. The legendary **Leslie/Lohman Gallery** proved to be a well-chosen location for “M.U.D.” The actors’ performance space is surrounded by the Gallery’s unparalleled display of erotic male artwork. It really boosts the show’s feverish eroticism, but also magnified the essence of “M.U.D.”: The show is genuinely a piece of erotic, romantic artwork come to life. And, as with any painting displayed on a wall, many different meanings can be interpreted from John Ollom’s newest creation.

The tour of “**M.U.D.**” continues on Saturday, June 5, 2010, at **Easton Mountain Retreat Center** in upstate New York. Visit www.EastonMountain.com for more details. Visit www.PrismaticProductions.com for more information on **Ollom Movement Art** or **Ollom Dance Theater**.

- Jed Ryan