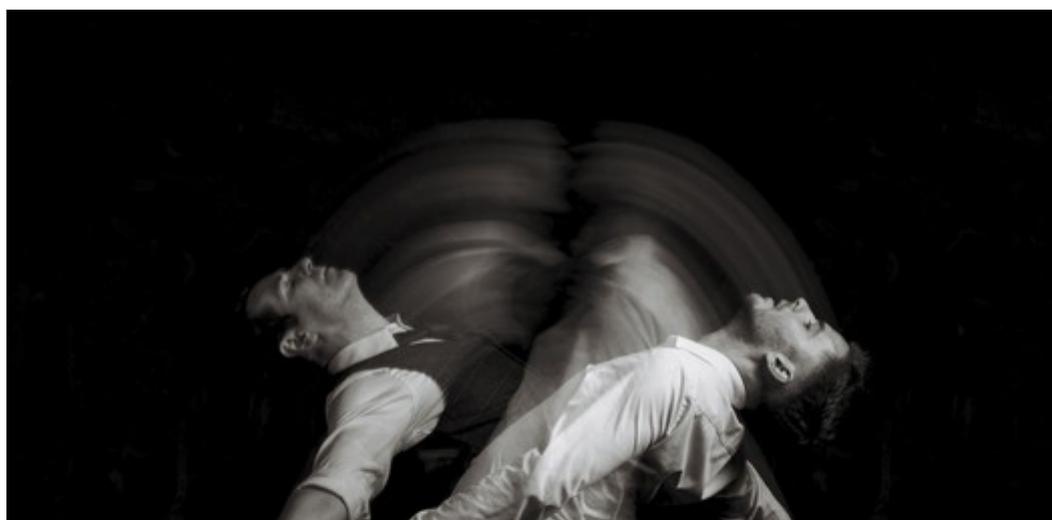


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# Opposites converge in an impressive "Linger"

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Breandán de Gallaí and Nick O'Connell in *Linger*  
*Declan English*

## Linger by Breandán de Gallaí

Rating: ★★★★★

Opposites attract and repel in Breandán de Gallaí's latest work '[Linger](#),' as youth and age, desire and restraint, tension and release converge. Seeking, whilst simultaneously avoiding connection, two male dancers explore identity, sexuality, masculinity and aging. At the heart of its fusion of forms, including waltz, tango, jazz and the choreographic stylings of Pina Bausch, Irish step [dance](#) looms large as de Gallaí attempts to reimagine the form, bringing to it a greater degree of expressiveness. Performed against a backdrop of projections and images, with a wonderfully evocative score by composer Zoë Conway, '[Linger](#)' is striking in its simplicity, searing in its honesty with two outstanding performances by both Gallaí as the older dancer and Nick O'Connell as his younger reflection.

In 'Linger' clothes can make and unmake the man, but the male body, strong yet vulnerable is accentuated. A body written upon, yet a body seeking to write a new text. 'Linger's' opening sequence establishes both the mirroring that dominates along with a baseline of movements, owing much to Bausch, that serve as a recurring pattern frequently returned to. Mirroring is loose, with synchronicity giving way to similarity, allowing individuality of expression to emerge, creating strong yet subtle contrasts. Throughout, there's a palpable sense of distance between both dancers, creating a haunting tension of longing, fear and desire. Expression and repression compete endlessly and when both dancers finally get their dancing shoes on for an exquisitely executed tango, the energy is almost kinetic as catharsis is almost achieved. But only almost. The journey isn't over quite yet.

Choreographically, de Gallaí makes strong, confident choices, where form and impulse craft strong yet tender sequences conveying powerful depths hidden beneath. Zoë Conway's excellent score informs as much as engages with both 'Linger's' themes and choreography, suggesting an array of interpretive possibilities. Less successful were James Keane's wonderful life drawings which were poorly served by being partially projected live onto a large screen to the rear of the stage, which often distracted from the dancers. Photographic images by Declan English, along with short video sequences by Terry O'Leary, though initially distracting, become more effective and engaging when confined to serving as links between costume changes, adding another element to 'Linger's' diverse tapestry.

If 'Linger' is not quite the immersive theatre experience it purports to be, it is still something both raw and fresh. With 'Linger' form and formality remain, and its influences are ever present. But both are loosened to explore other expressive possibilities. Its intensely, concentrated focus, with prolonged moments of stillness, coupled with the confined range of its movement vocabulary mirrored by both dancers, risked it becoming something both moody and broody at times, and not necessarily in a good way. But there is a power and tenderness at the heart of 'Linger.' Its tentative but determined exploration of forms, of marriages of forms, of male vulnerability and masculinity ultimately transcend their ever present influences, with 'Linger' becoming something new unto itself. Powerful, tender and achingly beautiful in places, 'Linger' marries both form and freedom, spontaneity and refinement and will most certainly linger long in the memory.

'Linger' by Breandán de Gallaí runs at The Project Arts Centre until January 23rd before touring to Firkin Crane on January 29th and Dance Limerick on February 4th

For further information on times and tickets visit [Project Arts Centre](#)



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