

# The City Theatre's new dance performance amazes and fascinates

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**Choreographers Annamari Keskinen and Ryan Mason invite you to a unique world with strong dancers in their new work for Helsinki Dance Company.**



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Text



**This is a review.** Analysis and opinions are the writer's own.



Sometimes strong control, sometimes gravity takes over. From left: Pekka Louhio, Mikko Paloniemi and Sofia Hilli.

Image: Kai Kuusisto/Press photo

## DANCE

Dreamer

Choreography: Annamari Keskinen and Ryan Mason. Scenography and lighting: William Iles.  
Costumes: Elina Kolehmainen. Sound and music: Timo Tikka. Music and cello: Saara Viika.



Mask: Ronja Nylund.

Dancers: Sofia Hilli, Jyrki Kasper, Aksinja Lommi, Pekka Louhio, Mikko Paloniemi, Justus Pienmunne, Inka Tiitinen, Anna Virkkunen, Elli Virtanen.

Helsinki Dance Company's premiere at Helsinki City Theatre 20.3.

Barbie pink, a tangle of microphone cords, a tuba. Seemingly cool people who suddenly crawl across the stage or suffer from spasms.

For just over an hour, the viewer gets to peek into a world all their own at the City Theatre's intimate Bölescen, Studio Pasila.

Analytically summarizing **Annamari Keskinen** and **Ryan Mason's** choreography *Dreamer* for the Helsinki City Theatre's dance company Helsinki Dance Company is not easy. There is no real theme, no plot.

I focus on capturing the subtle atmosphere, following the dancers' craft and their figures, which, especially at the beginning, make an entrance in solitary majesty.

The work captures the individual dancers beautifully, and HDC has many great personalities in its ranks.

## Cowboy boots as dancing shoes

*Scenographically, Dreamer* is a colorful caramel. No black box here, but a Barbie pink one!

In contrast, the dancers' clothing is quite everyday, underscoring my experience of observing an everyday world, twisted into a slightly kaleidoscopic form for the stage.





The gaze on the dancers feels empathetic. Justus Pienmunne at the tuba and Aksinja Lommi on the floor.

Image: Kai Kuusisto/Press photo

The shoes are also part of everyday life, which doesn't feel so common in a dance context. The cowboy boots in particular have a strong, unique expression. In contrast, **Justus Pienmunne's** expressive bare soles immediately catch my eye.

## Human and animal

The dancers could be anyone in your environment, except that they move according to a peculiar aesthetic. At first, they often freeze from pose to pose as if you were watching them under strobe lights.

Here there is both strong control and moments when control is lost and shaking spasms or gravity takes over, without virtuosity as an end in itself. The gaze on the dancers feels empathetic.

While the dancers feel strongly human, there is an animalistic element here. There is crawling and crawling, and I can almost see the insects moving over the dancers' hands.





After skillfully building a long arc towards an initial climax, the aesthetic changes somewhat in the last half hour.

The expression becomes softer, loneliness turns into coexistence with others. **Inka Tiitinen's** singing feels comforting and the music rises in a slow crescendo. The final image feels deceptively open. What are we really seeing? A jump rope or a DNA spiral? Life continuing its pleasant course?

## Swedish warms

Helsinki Dance Company is at an interesting stage.

The dance team is strong, this time impressing among others **Mikko Paloniemi**, **Jyrki Kasper** and **Aksinja Lommi**, who also got to use their voices – I can't help but get a little extra warm inside hearing Swedish on stage!



Helsinki Dance Company's Dreamer opens the door to an everyday, yet kaleidoscopically twisted world. Aksinja Lommi in the foreground and Sofia Hilli and Pekka Louhio in the background.

Image: Kai Kuusisto/Press photo


Afterwards, I go out into the street and observe the people around me, and think about everything that is happening inside them right now. What joys



and setbacks they are carrying, that I probably don't see.

Art once again acts as a mirror for the surrounding world.

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