

## Moment(s) to Reflect with KYL/D at the Prince Theater

April 2, 2016 - Jessica Warchal-King for The Dance Journal

[\*Republished by kind permission from The Dance Journal\*](#)



When did you last STOP?

When did you last take a moment to REFLECT?

In the dance world, and in the life-world, we are constantly going and when one project ends we're onto the next one and then something else happens and we never quite have the time to process what happened in the past or where we're going with the next step in whatever process we're trying to fulfill and sometimes we're not even sure what that fulfillment means but we're trying to keep up with the times and... (that's a long enough run on sentence. You get my point.)

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D) is preparing for our performance at Prince Theater April 14-16, 2016. We're deep in the running of the work and the imprinting of the work into our mind and bodies and fully embodying the intention. We're IN IT. And then (in my non-KYL/D time, when I'm doing a million other things), I get a group email from Artistic Director Kun-Yang Lin challenging us to reflect on the process and the performance.

Kun-Yang asks, “What is special about this concert? What is special about being a KYL/D artist?”

A tool for marketing, perhaps, but more than that, Kun-Yang is asking us to take a step back and reflect on the journey and decisions we’ve made as artists – to embark on the journey of the 2015-2016 season, but also to embark on the journey of being a fully embodied, aware, individual artist.

He writes to us in the space when we are away from the studio and the process, perhaps because in the studio, we are too present, too aware of the demands of performance. But, in the ensuing days and rehearsals, he also allows us space to process the experiences. He doesn’t demand that we journal or free-write, but he creates space during the rehearsal for us to converse, individually focus, or simply be present (or not, if we choose).

In that space and in their/our own words, the dancers verbalize what they/we experience non-verbally:

“‘Dancing is silent poetry.’ – Simonides. The whole show is like poetry. Like poetry, we make abstract imageries of fragments of our lives. Working as a KYL/D artist keeps me in a process that goes beyond movement exhibition. The process keeps me as artist to be in the practice of being present, to be in the practice of truth and integrity in order for the work to come to life. As an artist, we too leave with those feelings of reflecting, discovery, questioning and inspiration.” –**Annelille Gavino Kollman**

“What first drew me to KYL/D was the diverse range of movement. Class starts off exploring movement through improvisation and by the end you are doing challenging, detailed, dynamic filled movement. At face value, one would not see how the more experimental movement fits next to the precision at the end of class, but there is a through line. This underlying connection is something that intrigues me about KYL/D. Not only does one perceive it in the dance but it is a value found also in the dancers. We are a range of different ages, backgrounds, countries, ideology...etc. Yet Kun-Yang has brought us all together. For me being a Christian this type of community is close to my heart and reminds me of how heaven is described in the Bible...”a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Revelations 6:9). Kun-Yang encourages us to keep our distinctions, our individuality while still connecting us all.” –**Grace Stern**

“Each spring, the earth awakens from her slumber and explodes into new life. KYL/D’s home season at Prince Theater this April embodies the season’s spirit of phenomenal renewal. We are welcoming incredible new artists to the team, breathing new life into company repertoire, and premiering three new works. We will be building dreamscapes, putting the magnifying glass to the moments which touch us as humans, whirling and spiraling into gravity, and shedding our cold weather skins. The dances we are presenting will speak to the viewers, not only as audience members, but as humans. The most incredible aspects of working with KYL/D are right there in the company’s name: Kun-Yang Lin, and the Dancers. Our Artistic Director, Kun-Yang, is the force that pulled us all together. He gives us the freedom to express ourselves as individuals, and uses his expert eye to elevate that expression and unify it under the umbrella of his vision. Each project we embark upon is full of discovery, as he pushes us to dig deeper. The company always looks fresh, because we are constantly inspired to find new sides of our craft. The dancers who call KYL/D home are, on the surface, as diverse as one could imagine. Each person I work with has a different set of physical qualities, and artistic talents: beautiful, but seemingly mis-matched. We are united in our energetic awareness, our intention, and our desire to communicate.” –**Evalina “Wally” Carbonell**

“Every time we rehearse *Autumn Skin* I realize the ways that the piece provides a space in which I, too, from the inside, experience its transformational capacity. I discover again, as an artist, as a person, that regardless of the season, there is always, always the need to let go what is old and step into what is new–

always more shedding to do. *Autumn Skin* invites me into that process. With each embodiment of the work something shifts, something deepens, within the choreography, with the group of dancers, within myself, such that at this juncture, I feel that I will go on stage to perform this work a slightly different person than the one who entered the studio process months ago. It's such a gift to see my fellow company members find themselves, also, in the dance, and thus to see the dance find its new life. *Autumn Skin* is a repertory piece, which we are bringing back to the stage after a period of hibernation, and experiencing Kun-Yang listen to the piece and to the company, and to navigate what to keep, what to let go, and how to manifest the message within this incarnation of the dance, has been a rich and resonant process, the results of which I so look forward to sharing with our audiences at the Prince." –**Helen Hale**

“This concert is not only a visual feast, but also embody some different ways to express imagination and emotion through each piece. KYL/D keep a unique style, at the same time, continuously explore new way using body. We will bring new music, new pieces and new experience in this spring. Working with our artistic director, Kun-Yang Lin, I got a lot of inspiration. He guide us find our own voice and unique ourselves. He builds the big family- KYL/D. All of us put more emotion and passion in KYL/D and our dance.”–**Wei Wei Ma**

Personally, this performance feels like a culmination of my past and an explosion into something new. I've grown so much as a person and as an artist over the past few years and I carry my reflections and maturity into this new work. I have a deeper understanding of the intention of KYL/D's CHI Awareness Technique. This has bled into my other dancing lives and I have a more nuanced understanding of my relationships and how I embody them. I feel as though the past few months, especially, have allowed me the time and space to shed my own skin and walk into a new path of becoming. Additionally, I'm grateful for the amount of TIME we've had with each of these pieces over the past year. This practice of returning to the movement over time has allowed me become more aware of my own body in space, my breath in relationship to the other dancers, my own use of energy and tension, and the relationships I can create between the space and the audience.

I look forward to seeing you at the Prince Theater and reflecting with you, after the performance! – **Jessica Warchal-King**

**Kun-Yang Lin / Dancers**

Thursday, April 14 at 8pm

Friday, April 15 at 8pm

Saturday, April 16 at 2:30pm \*

Saturday, April 16 at 8pm

Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

Information and Tickets: [princetheater.org/events/kun-yang-lin-dancers](http://princetheater.org/events/kun-yang-lin-dancers)



Dance

## **KUN-YANG LIN / DANCERS PRESENTS THREE WORLD PREMIERES & A REVISED WORK AT PRINCE THEATER, APRIL 14-16**

**April 14, 2016 @ 8 p.m.**

Hailed for its superbly trained dancers and inventive choreography, the internationally-active, Philadelphia-based **KYLD** presents four Philadelphia performances of virtuosic dancing that stirs the soul. KYLD unveils three world premieres born of a collaboration with composer Daniel Rhode, commissioned by the New Music Ensemble of Grand Valley State University. The concert also features a bold revision of KYLD's acclaimed work, "Autumn Skin." Renowned violinist, Todd Reynolds, one of the founding fathers of the hybrid-musician movement and co-founder of the quartet, *Ethel*, will perform with KYLD on Saturday evening, April 16.

**Location:** Prince Theater

1412 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, 19102

**Age range:** All ages

### **Links**

[More Information](#)

[Ticket Information](#)

## Review – Moments by Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers

in [Chelsey Hamilton](#) / by [Chelsey Hamilton](#) / on April 19, 2016 at 7:47 pm /



photo credit: Frank Bicking

By Chelsea Hamilton for The Dance Journal

Artistic Director Kun-Yang Lin and Executive Director Rev. Ken Metzner stood in the lobby of the beautifully historical Prince Theater and personally greeted each and every guest attending their company's newest production: *Moment/s*.

The evening-length performance kicked off with the world premiere of *Dreamscape*, an intricate number performed by the company. The dancers appeared onstage in black unitards, so dark they almost disappeared into the black backdrop. The talented company members performed every single movement with intention and control over their bodies. This piece featured a number of ripples and fast movements, before moving into a duet and ending with all the dancers moving flawlessly together.

Next was the premiere of *Moment/s*, the namesake of the show. The piece started out with the dancers walking slowly, but intentionally, across the stage dressed in what appeared to be casual street clothes.

As listed in the program, “*Moment I*” was lead by the astonishing Weiwei Ma. The lighting, along with Ma's movement, casted an eerie feel over the stage. Ma moved with such clarity that it seemed as though her movement never stopped— each movement of hers flowed into the next. The choreography also did an incredible job of showcasing Ma's flexibility and fluidity.

“*Moment II*” featured the remainder of the cast. They walked on stage to join Ma as the music became more upbeat, and they walked faster and faster across the stage.

Evalina Cain Carbonell, known affectionately as “Wally,” performed a solo next, displaying her fascinating strength and control over her body. The dancers filtered back onto the stage and moved in unison, and the number finished with all standing together in the center of the stage, staring intently at a spot on the ground.

The next piece of the night, titled “*Vertigo*,” was also a world premiere. Clothed in light-colored dresses and pants, the dancers ran across the stage, displaying flowing arms and smooth, uninterrupted movement

throughout their bodies. Often pulling, helping and lifting one another, the choreography also included many high legs, showcasing the unaltered flexibility of each and every dancer in the company.

A moment that stood out was when the music stopped and the dancers each balanced on one leg in varying positions. When the music began again, they continued to perform a repetitive phrase and moved fluidly in unison together at the end. The use of dynamics, partnering and the repetition of phrasing over a score of beautiful violin music made this piece quite pleasing to watch.

The final performance of the night was a heavy revision of KYL/D's previously-performed piece titled *Autumn Skin*. The program notes that "*Autumn Skin* is suffused with the chaotic impulses of Nature's intricate dance of light and dark. Through the metaphor of Fall, *Autumn Skin* breaks open fixed notions of relationship, deconstructing emotion in order to uncover new meaning, new skin."

The dancers began clumped together, running to each corner as one and performing a repeated phrase, completely in unison. They were clothed in colorful sundresses, pants and collared shirts. Moving to the beat of the music, they slowly progressed into more fast-paced movements as the rhythm picked up, complete with high jumps, kicks and small, quick steps that had the audience cheering.

Two male company members, Nikolai McKenzie and Mo Liu, delivered standout performances as they executed a graceful partnering section while the rest of the dancers slowly moved back onto the stage and around the duo in slow motion. The final section of the number featured all the dancers moving very sharp and very clear as a group. The longest piece of the night, *Autumn Skin* featured a variety of partner and group work that never left the audience bored.

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers put on yet another incredible show, to no surprise.

## A Few Shared Moments with Kun-Yang Lin & Dancers

in [Featured Articles](#) / by [Steven Weisz](#) / on April 20, 2016 at 7:14 am /



*photo credit: Frank Bicking*

by Steven Weisz for The Dance Journal

Kun-Yang Lin's home season at the Prince on Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> marked a new revitalized spirit for both the company and its choreographer. While the program highlighted three premieres, the company members and Mr. Lin enthusiastically signaled not only a sense of renewal, but also an excitement of moving forward in to new territory in their exploration of movement.

The opening number *Dreamscape* was accompanied by the music of Daniel Rhode and a live performance of violinist, Todd Reynolds. While the music added to the surreal landscape created in this piece, the placement and lighting of Mr. Reynolds became a bit of a distraction to watching the movement on stage. Nevertheless, the dancers garbed in all black, blending in to the dimly lit background, created an other-world experience with a continual shifting of bodies and shapes. This was highlighted in the duet that emerged with dancers Annielille Gavino Kollman and Brian Cordov, whose brilliant interplay was accentuated by their height differences, creating a continually shifting perspective as their shadows cast danced in sync on the scrim behind them. Following a second shorter duet featuring Mo Liu and Grace Stern, we were then once again transported in to the ether. They were eventually joined by the full cast in a powerful and striking syncopation of movement.

Between production numbers we were treated to a solo by Helen Hale, utilizing mask and glow in the dark tipped fingers and select body parts. Her movements, while punctuated quite different, seemed almost an extension of the previous piece, inviting us to come along in this transformative journey.

With the premiere of *Moment/s*, we are literally taken on a whirlwind of fleeting moments in our everyday existence, challenging our very notions of time, space, relationships, tension, stillness and discovery. The piece itself is divided in to two sets of "moments". The first of these moments, opened to company members dressed in everyday attire walking briskly, to what we might experience as a daily rhythm. Eventually, the background noise gives way to a featured solo by Weiwei Ma. She treats us to a flowing, rich textured series of never ending movements that evoke both an emotional and spiritual quality, often the result of making choices and uncovering new meanings. Her movements challenge us in unexpected ways on this journey of self discovery.

With *Moment II*, we are presented with soloist, Evalina Cain Carbonell, who exuded both power and control in the “moments” she presented. I have seen Ms. Carbonell perform many times before, but in this piece, she embodied a new sense of both strength and freedom that made her performance riveting. Powerful movements with underlying tension and moments of strong quietness examined boundaries of our very existence. Eventually, the cast rejoins her on stage, moving in unison and coming together in a grounded stillness as they stare intently downward, leaving us to ponder these shared and fleeting moments.

We are once again treated to another Interlude between premieres. From between the curtains appeared Nikolai McKenzie, bare except for a black pair of shorts. His solo begins with minuscule movements of tension of varying muscle groups throughout his body. These are highlighted by lighting, designed by Stephen Petrilli, that literally created ripples, shadows and painted textures and layers, which accentuated his highly controlled movements. Mr. KcKenzie’s performance was a memorable highlight of the evening!

The last of the premieres before intermission was *Vertigo*, in which the KYL Dancers moved rapidly across the stage whirling, playing with and challenging the forces of gravity. Momentary pauses in the music left them intricately balanced and poised, then suddenly breaking in to repetitive phrasing and partnering as they once again succumbed to nature’s forces moving in unison.

The final piece of the evening was *Autumn Skin*, a 2016 revision of Mr. Lin’s choreography, which I had originally seen back in 2010 at the *Painted Bride*. As with most choreographers, no work is ever truly finished, but this re-make of what was already a very powerful piece was simply superb. Every action has a reaction; and we all share an interconnectedness that transcends our own physicality. In each of our actions, we affect our environment and those who surround us both seen and unseen. With *Autumn Skin*, Mr. Lin literally peels back the layers, allowing us to examine our own existence and its affect on others, and from the chaos find new meaning, perhaps just as he has done with his own company.



# THE DANCE ENTHUSIAST

**Kun-Yang Ling/Dancers is one company on the dance map in The City of Brotherly Love that continues to push artistic boundaries.**



By Gregory King/Follow @Daansir on Twitter

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Published on May 5, 2016

KYL/D in "Vertigo" by RobLi Photography

## **Moment/s: From The Mobile to The Moderate**

**Choreographer: Kun- Yang Lin**

**The Prince Theatre, Philadelphia**

**April 14 – 16th, 2016**

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Before moving to Philadelphia, my knowledge of dance was limited to the scene in New York City. Spaces like The Joyce, Lincoln Center, St. Marks Church, and Riverside Church Theatre, presented dance companies with diverse aesthetics; so it was easy to experience a plethora of dance without leaving New York. But, with its share of dance schools, performance spaces, and dance companies, Philadelphia is also a place where dance thrives.

Kun-Yang Ling/Dancers is one company on the dance map in The City of Brotherly Love that continues to push artistic boundaries.

Choreographer and artistic director of KYL/D, Kun-Yang Lin, presented three world premieres and a revision of a former work, at the company's home season at the Prince Theatre. Admittedly, I have seen Lin's works in many venues but never a program boasting three world premieres.

I sometimes find it problematic when choreographers show a night of their works, as the possibility of sameness presents itself, resulting in a viewing experience with very limited variety. And while some may be drawn to such uniformity, the monotony may border excessive for others.



KYL/D's Evalina Carbonell and Liu Mo in *Autumn Skin*; Photo by Frank Bicking

Many of works in KYL/D's repertoire, deal with transformation and journey. Older pieces like *Crossings*, *One-Immortal Game*, and *Home/S.9th St.*, refer to passage. This common denominator helps thread spirituality through Lin's works. It is within the realm of otherworldliness that Lin's aesthetic allows his dancers to move from rapid, hurried movements to a more meditative pace with ease.

The show opened with *Dreamscape* and dance artist Nikolai McKenzie painted the upstage space with distortions as he moved from stage right to stage left. Like an amoeba with a spine, he sinuously organized his body, bending and twisting as if he was drawing the letter S, careful to allow every joint to be affected by his wavelike quality. McKenzie's efforts were rewarded with audible gasps appreciation from the audience.

In the world premiere *Moment/s*, dancer Evalina Carbonell stood out with her seamless level changes, descending from standing to crawling at a swift pace. After seeing Carbonell in a few of Lin's works, her commitment to delivering his intention is

obvious. She attacks the work with zeal and stays alert with a readiness to perform any transition.



KYL/D's Annielille Gavino-Kollman in *Vertigo*; Photo by Frank Bicking

Wearing costumes of a greyish hue, another world premiere *Vertigo*, displayed the dancers in many forms of off-centeredness. They moved at dizzying speeds before resolving in a clump where each artist slowly dissolved to the floor.

The last piece, *Autumn Skin*, was a revision from 2016 choreography vault. Lin's choreographic formula continued in the style of his previous works; a noticeable pattern of group pieces from which solos and duets were extracted. The vocabulary included poses that trailed off into rippling torsos before settling into moments of brief suspensions.

One moment reminiscent of Zoe Juniper's [Begin Again](#) occurred as dance artists Brian Cardova and Annielille Gavino-Kollman, played in the lighting design of Stephen Petrilli, creating shadows reflected on the scrim. Living in the front lights, the shadows extended from their

motionless bodies. Cardova's reflection was hulk-like when lit, but Gavino-Kollman's was miniature in comparison because of her distance from the strategically placed downstage light. Performing gestures at a relaxed pace, the two live bodies and the two shadows produced quartet. Visually striking, the image spoke to how one can be transported by Lin's choreography.

While the dancers of KYL/D swam in Lin's choreography, I kept thinking that something was missing from each work. There was always an edge to Lin's choreography; something offbeat about phrasing, something gritty about his vocabulary. And after watching this season, I began to wonder if Lin's choreography had gotten more conservative than gutsy. I was pleased at what the dancers brought to the stage, but I missed the audaciousness of Lin's earlier works.

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# Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers' *Moment/s* Inspires

by [Lewis J Whittington](#) April 21, 2016

[Prince Theater](#), 1412 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102



Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers premiered new works and revisited a repertory classic for their spring home series, *Moment/s*, April 14-16 at the Prince Theater in Center City Philadelphia. The company has been performing at various locales around Philadelphia and adding new audiences to their already loyal following.

Choreographer Kun-Yang Lin also made this an occasion to showcase the range of his choreography. Many of Lin's signature works are often imbued with Asian classicism and a choreographic fusion of East and West. In this program, he showcased those qualities plus other choreographic styles.

Lin's "Dreamscape" opened with dancer Brian Cordova in a dramatic entre solo, and then joined by the rest of the troupe, the dancers formed fluid geometric clusters and stunning dance noir stage pictures.

An interlude by dancer Helen Hale in a Chinese opera mask, green illuminated fingers and a skeletal body costume, created a haunting scene.

Then the curtain came up on Lin's "Moment/s" with the dancers costumed in street clothes walking around the stage, some locking into slow motion or reverse motion. The group movement of everyday life that Lin meditated on was highlighted by solos sections danced with riveting expressions of inner turmoil by dancers WeiWei Ma and Evalina Cain Carbonell.

Next, new company member Nikolai McKenzie performed a second untitled interlude crawling out from under the Prince Theater's red stage curtain. The stage lighting dramatically hitting the contracted back muscles of his hunched torso with his legs bent perilously inward at the knee. In black dance trunks, McKenzie's torso oscillations, and limbs in extremis, were both beautiful and broke through any hint of grotesquery - **Lin making a vital statement on the nobility, and inspiring power of the human body.**

"Vertigo" finished the first section. For six dancers, it was a meditation on modern life knocking us off balance and our individual and private strategies to move through everyday chaos toward inner peace and resolve.

Lin collaborated directly with composer David Rhodes in developing the driving musical soundscape for the five-part first half of the program. In the April 16 performance, virtuoso Todd Reynolds played electric violin on top of the recorded tracks.

Next, Lin's 2010 work "Autumn Skin," expanded by Lin in this 2016 revision, was about the physical and emotional expressions of relationships. The full company set off in double-tempo, driving ensemble unison that splinteed, regrouped at the corners of the stage (reaching together for something) and then the dancers scrambled away into break out solos.

Later, Lui Mo and Brian Cordova had a dance of brotherhood or as lovers; they conveyed that they were working something out between them.

Dancers Cordova and Annielille Gavino Kollman were also having full on relationship drama as Kollman flew in Cordova's arms, but seconds later they were face-to-face expressing frustration and despair. Mo and Carbonell's characters were also expressing relationship angst. Lin timed-them out long enough for Mo to flyover the stage with his signature explosive aerials.

"Autumn Skin" contained Lin's signature movement meditations with dancers writing calligraphy on air and slow-motion sculpted group shapes that kept evolving.

Impressive also were new dancers Kollman, McKenzie and Grace Stern who fit right in with finely balanced nine-member troupe.



Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers in Kun-Yang Lin's "Autumn Skin."

Photo © & courtesy of RobLi Photography