



Motionhouse

CHARGE

ELECTRIFYING DANCE CIRCUS

SCENE 1: STROP DUET

Questions

What can you see and hear right from the outset?

What is odd about the way the dancers are positioned and moving?

How are his movements different from hers?

Where is his focus? What does she look at?

What can you see and hear in the film?

Would you say the couple know each other?

How did the music make you feel?

What images are shown in the photos and video footage?

Can you describe how the images are framed and how they appear and disappear?

What do you think is happening in the scene?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	Electricity, synapses, Old faded photographs/video footage, blurred & intermittent Costumes are everyday clothes	Bio-electrical firing. The brain Memories of childhood holidays, freedom, youth and ease Everyday people & stories
SOUND	An intense low pitched sustained pedal note on cello + irregular buzzes and fizzes Strings play glissandos that slip and slide using harmonics Intermittent 4-note keyboard fragments, sounds layer and intensify then fade back to one bass pedal note	Impersonal, dangerous Electrical short- circuiting tense, fragile, eerie, out of kilter melancholic, hopeless, ominous Tension builds. Foreboding A question mark hangs in the air
MOVEMENT	Vertical distance. They are on different planes. Her movements and shapes are ethereal, languid; his are naturalistic gestures; grounded & minimal and his facial expression is worn out, hopeless, sad.	Remoteness: she is in her own world; conscious of him but unable to connect. Although in close proximity; they are isolated from each other. Both seem pained, confused and fatigued.

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

While the audience members are still taking their seats, we see and hear streaks of electricity firing and flashing intermittently between light nodes across a dark set. These continue as the lights fade up to reveal a man and woman. They are never very far from each other but, oddly, there is distance between them because they are on different planes. Becci is vertical; suspended upside down in the air, hanging by her feet, with the top of her head just above Danny's chest. He lies on his back, face up, underneath her. Their physical proximity suggests they know each other well – perhaps they are married and have been together for years – but when she changes position and reaches out for him, he seems unaware and moves so that they just keep missing each other. They both appear to be in their own worlds – remote and

dazed; and Danny never looks up. She stretches into languid arches. His movements, by contrast, are naturalistic and restless: he kneels, crouches, stands, walks and lies down. He never looks up but instead runs his hands through his hair and looks out, straight ahead with a pained expression. Ostensibly, it seems he is the one suffering the most from their estrangement.

The sliding glissandos in the soundtrack create an eerie effect as though the world is tipping up sideways and, in the background and across the bodies, black and white images of old, faded photographs and video footage come and go: a waterfall, a child on a slide, a family group, a pebble beach. But the edges of the images are blurred and irregular; they appear fragile and fleeting, like memories. The images and sounds of electrical impulses firing, and the way the photographs flicker in response, suggest they are connected. The music (single, sustained low-pitched notes played on cello and short 4-note keyboard fragments) is slow, melancholic and foreboding which makes the couple and their situation seem terribly sad.