



Motionhouse

CHARGE

ELECTRIFYING DANCE CIRCUS

SCENE 11: BRAIN

Fast Forward

How does the music change?

What do you notice about the movement in the film?

Does the movement match the pace of the music and the film?

How many different relationships are you following?

Can you see connections between the people in the film and the live movement?

Watch Becci and Danny closely throughout. How do they react to the people around them and to each other?

Do you notice anything unusual about Danny's behaviour and actions in this scene?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	Speeded up film of a city street bustling with people with some frozen in close-up.	Time passing quickly
SOUND	Abrupt change from calm wash to rapid & rhythmic 4/4 time. Piano riffs & arpeggios lead to a driving, syncopated rhythmic accompaniment of crotchets and dotted crotchets. Three further riffs are introduced: an insistent 4-crotchett riff in the bass; a bubbling 'two sets of triplets followed by a minim' phrase & a two bar long motif with two sets of triplets as a descending violin idea.	Sudden switch to a busy, lively, city vibe. Life is busy, full of surprises and keeps you on your toes Suggesting different voices – the parents, the child, others – complicating relationships and lives
MOVEMENT	Individuals and pairs follow their own paths, criss-crossing the space to meet others in a speedy succession of character-driven 1-1 interactions & relationships. They run, jump, lift, swing, stop, brush past each other and periodically freeze to link with still images in the film. One by one Danny lifts and throws others with particular energy; also hits and shakes his head violently.	Naomi meets Al. Becci and Danny are not entirely happy she will be safe. Is Danny in pain and lashing out? Multiple fast-paced distractions, stories & people: a life in fast-forward

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

The child grows up bringing new relationships to the family: a boyfriend, Al. Naomi's parents try to keep her with them but she now has her own mind. Danny appears to be lashing out at everyone around him, which is setting everyone else on edge. At one point Al moves to touch Danny's face and he pushes him away, bashes his own head with his hands and shakes it violently as though trying to dislodge unpleasant thoughts. The rapidly changing relationships are shown against a busy, city street which is a mixture of speeded up film – people whizzing past so fast as to be unrecognisable – and images of people frozen in time. The movement and music also have this characteristic of frantic speed and frozen moments; like life and memories.

Lightbulb duet

How do the couple react to the lightbulb in the duet?

How many lifts and holds occur?

Which dancer leads most of the movement? Who appears more vulnerable?

Which body part initiates many of the moves?

How would you describe the dynamic and the mood between them?

Who keeps an eye on the lightbulb?

Do the couple travel in space?

What happens as Becci tries to leave the stage?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	A single lightbulb is lowered & is the only light source in the duet. It rises when Becci moves to touch it. A second bulb lowers into Becci's path as she tries to escape the space. She exits.	Dark, gloomy. The bulb is 'evasive' as though resisting analysis. She tries to escape it but another lowers rapidly to block her path. Whatever it represents is seemingly unavoidable.
SOUND	The music continues unchanged from the previous busy scene except for a semi-tone rise and fall in the strings. The busyness then falters and decays, gradually fragmenting and stopping as the piano plays a descending idea of the triplet/crotchet, triplet/crotchet as a full stop.	The pretence that things are normal can't be sustained. Gaps are opening up. Awkwardness; things are unresolved.
MOVEMENT	Everyone disappears leaving Becci & Danny standing next to a lightbulb. Both touch it warily then Becci cradles her hands beneath it and follows it up as it rises from her reach. Becci/Danny contact duet beneath the bulb: a succession of lifts and holds with especial focus on hands as point of contact. Danny leads; Becci responds and twice falls to the floor. Danny looks	No hiding behind everyday life: the lightbulb mercilessly reminds them that whatever is wrong now has to be articulated. Sequence takes the form of a heated dialogue, that at times veers into argument. Tension: she collapses, he revives her. In denial. End of discussion. Separation. The movement of

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
	up at the lightbulb. Towards the end, Becci takes the lead and finally steps away from him and exits. Danny follows; slides to lie beneath the lowering bulb, which hovers just above his heart.	the lightbulbs harshly reiterates the couple's fear for their relationship and each other. He accepts the truth.

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

The sense of foreboding returns as, one by one, all the characters (memories?) disappear, leaving only Becci and Danny beneath the lightbulb.

Their contact duet is rooted to the spot below the light and takes the form of a heated dialogue. Their hands seem to be a point of electrical transfer, as though it is through the hands that they connect and converse, argue, insist, disagree. Although both initiate hand holds, it is Danny who leads and controls the movement that ensues, lifting, turning, pulling, supporting and holding Becci. Twice he throws her off and looks up at the lightbulb as she rolls to the floor.

Towards the end of the duet, Becci briefly takes control, leading and lifting Danny before stepping away and calling a halt to their discussions. She scurries away but another bulb lowers mercilessly into her path. The facts are inescapable and the lightbulb a cold stark reminder that one of them will eventually forget the other. Becci exits hurriedly and Danny follows but collapses beneath the, now rapidly descending, bulb to lie out on the floor. The light hovers just above his chest in exactly the spot Becci's head occupied in the opening strop duet.

Cocoons / synapses

Who is the only visible character and where have you seen this shape before?

What is different this time?

What images can you see in the film?

What is the mood/flavour of the music?

In which direction does the minimal movement shift?

At the end, film flickers over the dancers feet – what does the film depict?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	A single light bulb low to the ground creates a glow on Danny's chest Film is dominant – the art of colour, shape and design: a giant network of dendrons & nerves that shift slowly and imperceptibly. When the dancers feet touch the ground – we glimpse fleeting and partial images from the film in the strop duets: a face from a photograph, a piece of green grass	Desolation: loss of love Reference to the opening image of the strop duets, except a lightbulb now occupies the space over Danny where Becci's head was. The beautiful artistic interior of the brain: complex, mysterious, unknowable, alive, diseased. Glimpsed, easily missed, the last fading memories?
SOUND	A low drone note then a gradual crescendo of short, vocal melodic phrases with an Indian/sitar flavour which continue throughout along with rising note motifs at regular intervals and regular percussive electrical-sounds. Glissandos on strings slide in and out of the texture. All fade to leave only electrical 'zsst' noises	Bathing in gentleness, kindness, femaleness & conjuring Indian ideas of meditation, reincarnation & re-birth. The softness gives way to harsher, more electrical irregular oddities.
MOVEMENT	Danny lies beneath the lightbulb – an echo of the opening shape in the strop duets. No stage movement but dancers inside the silks create bulges and shapes that move slowly downwards. When their feet hit the floor, the spell is broken. A rare pause in the soundtrack.	The lightbulb = the brain ; the threat to the couple's relationship? The amazing interior of the brain: calm, alive complex, beautiful, but diseased.

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

This scene is in striking contrast to everything that has gone before. The only visible character, after all this storytelling, is Danny who lies motionless beneath the light. The lightbulb hovers above Danny's heart, casting a warm glow; symbolic of the couple's struggle with memory loss and their pain at the thought of losing each other.

Quiet and meditative, the film and music together conjure the complex, artistic interior of the unknowable human brain and the slow, downward slide of the movement inside the silks, the inexorable progress of the disease.

Forgetting

How many exchanges can you count?

How many relationships can you identify?

What mood is set by the music?

Were you aware of the electrical images and sounds?

Watch Becci and Danny's movements closely – what are they trying to do?

How many times does the reaching arm gesture recur?

Do you recognise the woman suffering the migraines from the lightbulb duet?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	<p>The dark moody softness disappears and is replaced by a stark horizontal corridor of unforgiving bright light downstage.</p> <p>Localised rapid, flashing, electrical images of blue and white streaks & coils become the backdrop for each encounter.</p>	<p>This is the exterior reality. Harsh, dangerous, harmful, unkind, hurtful</p> <p>The flashing of an ill brain representing anger, impatience, frustration, desperation.</p>
SOUND	<p>Above a gentle regular percussive rhythm, rapid, repeated single piano notes keep recurring and plucked piano strings create a strange metallic sound (John Cage-style).</p>	<p>Insistent, annoying, restricted, tense, harsh, minimal.</p>
MOVEMENT	<p>A rapid succession of fast-moving contact duets each comprising an action and response. Each involves different character-combinations in rough exchanges of energy: throws, leaps, crashes, falls, pushes & pulls linked by a violent dynamic.</p> <p>That familiar recurring arm gesture offering help and solace is again futile.</p> <p>Martina becomes dominant & hunches over clutching her head.</p>	<p>Arguments, fights: the frustrating conflation and confusion of memories past and present.</p> <p>Desperate clutches become smothering clingy-ness and are roughly shaken off. Pleas for help and offers of help seem always to be mistimed, misunderstood or ignored.</p> <p>The young Becci, crippled by migraine.</p>

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

The momentum picks up with a series of violent exchanges between the characters. Becci and her younger self (Martina) desperately grab and hold fast to Danny and Chris (the young Danny), who shake or throw them off in their efforts to free themselves. The battles take the form of action – response which could suggest actual arguments and fights, or perhaps in Becci's confused mind she is grasping at memories from different times in her life which have begun to conflate and jostle with one another. What were once good memories are mixing together with the present and take on a different hue. The aural accompaniment of fizzing and buzzing sounds (electrical misfiring?); the tightly patterned, electric blue flashes (migraine?) and the fact that all the action occurs in a narrow band of stark, unforgiving light, accentuates the sense of conflict, stress and relentless repetition.

And the futile wooden arm gesture – a plea for help, a futile offer of assistance – pepper the exchanges echoing back to earlier scenes.