

Motionhouse

CHARGE

ELECTRIFYING DANCE CIRCUS



SCENE 12: HEART

Heart Attack

Are the dancers always in time with each other or do they move in and out of sync?

Which choreographic devices are used to show electrical disunity?

The dancers change their diagonal – why?

What is the effect created by the slapping of arms to sides?

What happens to the heartbeat in the soundtrack?

Who falls to the floor? Who runs to her? Do you recognise this image from earlier?

Naomi arches her back four times – what might this represent?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	Darkened space – bodies lit as silhouettes.	Ominous.
SOUND	A strong and regular heart beat. Other rhythms are superimposed to synchronise, including live body-induced sounds (slaps off arms to sides) The melodic ideas and rhythms are persistent.	Dramatic tension – blood coursing through the body pumped by a young strong heart. The heart becomes a 'wriggling bag of worms' no

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
	Gradually rhythms start to fall out of sync and are superimposed one upon another in a tangled mess. The texture becomes an incoherent counterpoint.	longer able to pump the blood: heart attack.
MOVEMENT	<p>Rapid, tiny shifts of weight repetitive, rhythmic and in perfect unison.</p> <p>Tiny sharp vertical jumps with an asymmetrical whipping arm gesture punctuate the settled rhythm</p> <p>Sudden divide into canon; new contorted shapes & falls.</p> <p>Change of face. Unison returns but quickly falls away until all movement is out of sync. Naomi falls out of the group. Arches her back x 4</p> <p>Series of cameo stills: resuscitation shape; naturalistic gestures: hand on arm, focus, expression, turning away.</p>	<p>The heart is pumping regularly – peaks could suggest the printout of the heart beat on a monitor or could mean a ‘blip’ or tiny undiagnosed issue that goes unnoticed.</p> <p>At first synchronised, the impulses become erratic but rhythm and unison is restored – Time passes, but impulses are failing more often.</p> <p>Naomi is resuscitated 4 times but her heart refuses to restart.</p> <p>Horror and shock of the family. They try to comfort each other.</p>

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

A heart attack does not mean the heart stops. More often it means the electrical impulses that drive the pump action go out of sync. This is what the performers are showing us: from moving in perfect unison, they fall out of time and dance the heart attack of the daughter, Naomi, who falls away from the group. Her boyfriend runs to her and this is the image we have seen before at the end of Aerial Towers. Perhaps the memory of this traumatic event is often replayed in the mind and will remain one of the most enduring when other memories are being lost.

Love

What sculptured shapes do the dancers make as a group?

What film images are projected onto the set?

What sounds can you hear?

How would you describe the dynamics in the movements?

How do the giant group structures transit into each other?

What mood is created by the scene?

Why are the heart structures projected after Naomi's heart attack and not before?

SIGNIFIERS	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
VISUALS	Giant pulsating heart images.	Strong life force.
SOUND	Everything fades to a single throbbing heart beat Sustained strings include fragments plucked on a harp. Strong string melodies crescendo in a minor key Everything fades to an electric fizzle.	Life goes on but pain and loss is prevalent – plucking on the heart strings Feelings of sadness intensify It's all down to biological electricity.
MOVEMENT	Dancers disappear inside the film; their body parts forming and re-forming the shape of the heart and its major structures; fluid movement.	Unity and support in the face of the tragedy of young life lost; the devastating, life-destroying impact on those who remain.

Summary of meaning, mood and significance

The cameos merge sympathetically from the individualised grief of family members into the building of a giant heart contained within a projected filmic outline and pulsing in time with a strong, audible heartbeat.

The heart sculpture is built first in midair, then reforms on the floor. In between, the dancers move through a series of continuous free-flowing contact moments that dovetail one into another like blood through veins and arteries, or tears down a face.