

'O~philia'

Devised, directed and performed by actor and performance artist Keziah Joseph.

Physical description of Keziah:

A young dark brown skinned woman, Black British caribbean, of slight build and just above average height, wears a sheer black sleeveless top, under which, a brown skin coloured leotard with an indigo blue & purple lace bra worn over the top, and backwards. Keziah wears on her bottom half, turquoise green FILA men's shorts with thin purple pin stripes, black Adidas leggings and black dance socks, no shoes.

Her hair is in short black box braids with some indigo blue braids here and there that become visible when she dances. She has indigo blue nail art inspired by Anj Smith's paintings, cat eye make up, and puts on Pat McGrath's Deep Void lipstick during the performance, which is a deep dark purple colour.

Transcript for the piece:

L:

Sister

do not sleep

But let me hear from you.

The trifling of his favor,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute.

(It won't last, his affection for you will fade after a minute. Not a second more)

Perhaps he loves you now...
but you must fear.

Weigh what loss your honor may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia.

Fear it, my dear sister.

And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.

Be wary, then. Best safety lies in fear.

(Think about how shameful it would be for you to give in to his seductive talk and surrender your treasure chest to his greedy hands. Watch out, Ophelia. Just keep your love under control, and don't let yourself become a target of his lust. Simply exposing your beauty to the moon at night is risky enough—you don't have to expose yourself to him. Even good girls sometimes get a bad reputation. So be careful)

Fear will keep you safe.

Remember well what I have said to you.

P:

'Tis told me he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.

You do not understand yourself so clearly.

(If things are as the way people tell me they are—and they're only telling me this to warn me—then I have to say, you're not conducting yourself with the self-restraint a daughter of mine should show)

Pooh, you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his "tenders," as you call them?

Marry, I'll teach you.

Think yourself a baby
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling.

Tender yourself more dearly.

From this time
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence.

In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows.

(Make yourself a precious commodity. Remember that Hamlet is young and has a lot more freedom to fool around than you do. In short, Ophelia, don't believe his love vows. To put it plainly...Do as I say).

H:
'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most
beautified Ophelia,'

In her excellent white bosom.

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.
'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;
I have not art to reckon my groans: but that
I love thee best, O most best, believe it. 'Thine evermore most dear lady

P:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star...'

H:
Why,
'One fair daughter and no more,
The which he loved passing well.'

P:
[Aside] Still on my daughter.

Queen G:
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again.

H:
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Ay, truly; I did love you once.

You should not have believed me; I loved you not.

Get thee to a nunnery:

If thou dost marry,
be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as
snow,

Get thee to a
nunnery,

go: farewell.

Or, if thou wilt needs
marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough
what monsters you make of them.

To a nunnery, go,
and quickly too.

To a nunnery,
go.

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

I mean, my head upon your lap?

Do you think I meant country matters?

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Nothing.

It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

I'm violent now (original piece)

I've begun to feel really differently about violence.

Oh no don't worry!

I don't mean like that.

Did you think I meant like that?

No.

Let me tell this differently.

Once upon a time I *was* really violent.

You couldn't even look at me without me taking that as an invitation to fight.

I'd agress at anyone "in my space"

Square my full body up to theirs - it didn't matter their size.

I'd feel this almighty surge of power well up inside me and would exert it with full force against...well, whoever I liked.

People knew not to mess with me.

They weren't standoffish openly, just sort of, "gave me my space".

Saw me walking down the street and would sort of close off their bodies or cross the road if they knew what was good for them.

They'd talk slowly and calmly to me unless they set me off.

Once or twice they even tried to warn me about things that might act as a red rag to a bull. How considerate. It's like they had this radar...or I gave off clear "I'm violent" signals...

Queen Gertrude's Soliloquy - Hamlet, Act 4 Scene 7:

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

I've noticed (original piece)

I've noticed

People *expect* violence from me.

I've noticed

You can get completely defined by one moment even if you've shown yourself to be consistently something else.

I've noticed...

Hmm

Hmmmm

Maybe it's in the way that I breathe

Or don't breathe

I'm a shallow breather

You'll barely hear me

It's not good

Maybe that's what makes people uncomfortable

Being around me

But violent?

Hmm

Angry?

Well yes, maybe.

Weak as I am.

I'm a pacifist though.

An angry pacifist, you know?

I find I remember what you say.

I mull it over

And over.

And over.

I've noticed

sometimes people just do not like you

I've noticed...

it's not the end of the world.

Where I am (original piece)

I am there in the abyss,

In the black mist rising

Bleeding up from the vibrant purple facing the False Steward.

I am cocooned in the screaming mouth,

Within the sticks and stones,

Caught above the cross wires of Mayday.

Post-war, post pandemic.

I pick up my tools
To measure, to untangle, to cut away, to clean.
I am found in the sticky syrup,
The sweet memories,
The sugary melted mess.
The Deep Void,
The "Rhino Lisa",
The rare bird of paradise.
I'm captured in a jelly bean
Trapped in the silk casing,
Peeking out from under the smashed glass floor,
which is actually my ceiling.
Can you see that?
And I will be there,
Where I am.
For as long as Hidden Activities remain hidden.

QUEEN G:

I will not speak with her.
She is importunate, indeed distract:
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Gentleman:

She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures
yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

QUEEN G:

Let her come in.

KING C:
Pretty lady?

Pretty Ophelia!

How long hath she been thus?

Follow her close; give her good watch

O, this is the poison of deep grief;

poor Ophelia

Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:

L:
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam.
O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as moral as an old man's life?

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

QUEEN G:
your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

L:
Drown'd!

Queen G:
Drown'd, drown'd.

Clown:
She drowned herself in her
own defence?

Clown 2:

Why, 'tis found so.

Clown:

Here lies the water; good: here
stands the man; good; if the man go to this water,
and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he
goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him
and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he
that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Priest:

Her death was doubtful;

L:

Lay her i' the earth:
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! A ministering angel shall my sister be.

H:

The fair Ophelia!

QUEEN G:

Sweets to the sweet:

Sweet maid.

H:

I loved Ophelia: