

Live Performance Critique

The Coyaba Dance Theater is a very interesting program. The theme throughout this celebration was “Let’s go back, so we can move forward.” I found that interesting because even though it is their 24 year celebration, it is during Black History month. Which makes it even more powerful. The performance I was most drawn to was Mami Wata. It was compelling. While watching, it was obvious that the woman in white wearing the white headwrap was the eldest because the other people were gathering around her. Maybe they surrounded her because she was the wisest and is a guidance to the youth. I also believe that all the people represented purity because white is connected to that. I noticed that the eldest woman was wearing a blue tied cotton belt, which represented the water because that is what was said during intermission. I felt like the dance was very traditional, almost like connecting with the ancestors. The music felt traditional but it reminded me of old Japanese music with a mix of light lofi beats. Which was interesting. As the performance was wrapping up, it was said that it was about the power of cleansing and nurture; Going back to the water and rebirthing/rejuvenating yourself. That explains why I felt so connected to the dance as a young person.

The second part of the dance was also powerful. The Yoruba chant *yemenya*. It was powerful because the eldest lady was singing and the rest of the people were dragging a body. Which was totally shocking at first. As the people were dragging the body, it almost looked like they were cleansing the person in the bag because each person was holding their skirts and blowing it over the body. When the people finished cleansing the person, the person rose up like a snake and I want to note that they were wearing blue. Maybe representing the water or getting a deeper connection with the ancestors. All in

all, I thought the performances were really good. I think that it was a nice reminder that when things get tough, one should go back to themselves or a higher being to rejuvenate.