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**ABOUT THIS REVIEWER - MARCH 11, 2020 BY JOE**

## Veinticinco: a myth of the brain (The Tank)



The brain has been studied for centuries. **Veinticinco: a myth of the brain** is a performance art piece that ponders that fact in a personal way. The brain adapts, molds and transforms. One of the four young women says “all of this I’ve been obsessed with. So obsessed with.”

The four lobes of the brain are covered in this meditative exploration. The temporal lobe is in charge of language. Cleverly, the show begins with “maybe it’s the first thing

you recall that starts building a language.” The ladies then alternate snippets of the first things that they remember as a young child. “My turtle Leo” had a name which was based on a television program. This detail later elicits a laugh as she recounts all her turtles up through Leo seven. When the thoughts are sharply detailed, Veinticinco is at its most effective.

Isabella Uzcátegui created this piece in collaboration with her co-performers Sofia Figueroa, Ana Moioli and Sofia Sam. With backgrounds from Venezuela, Brazil and Peru, the languages of their own histories are addressed. “I have to give up a part of myself to speak English.” The English language is considered “very chewy” and makes “my brain go slightly faster.” Emotions are “definitely for Spanish.” Hearing foreign languages interspersed throughout the show brings these storytellers to life.

Most of the dialogue spoken is in short segments. There is some vivid imagery developed such as equating one’s mind to mirrors and windows. The occipital lobe controls sight and illusions. One complements she likes the color of another’s blue shirt. But it’s green. It looks blue. “It’s yellow,” concludes a third person. The show is also a playful study on our brains; what makes us similar and what makes us different.

Directed by Attilio Rigotti, Veinticinco flows easily between proclamations, questions, insights and movement. The lighting design by Orsolya Szánthó is particularly fascinating in its variation and choreography. Most of the effects are hand held by the cast. There is a feeling of analysis and of illumination. The staging and visual impact added a nice layer of mystery. We know what we know and we don’t know what we don’t.

“This is my dream body” is said during the segment which covers the frontal lobe. What followed caught me by surprise. “Wouldn’t it be great,” we are asked, “to have a second brain... a reserve heart... that would just drop down into place when the first one breaks?” Memorable writing is a strength of this show.

Clocking in at forty five minutes, Veinticinco is probably long enough for now. There is a distant, lecture-like quality to this dreamlike excursion into the brain. I found myself wanting to know more about these women which is a good sign that they drew my attention into their vision. If each person had a short monologue or two, that could

potentially allow us to get emotionally attached to their exploration rather than primarily intellectually.

Cinquanta might be a nice follow up piece twenty five years from now. What makes artists' tick and want to create is usually interesting and, as is the case in this unique production, often entertaining.

*The Tank is a non-profit presenter and producer serving 2,500 artists in 1,000 productions annually on their two stages.*

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