

art  
film  
music  
radio/tv  
theater  
the city  
etc  
opinion  
dance

ADVERTISEMENT

REVIEW: FROZEN MOMMY

POST A  
COMMENT!

READ  
COMMENTS!



L-R: Matthew Rogers, Christopher Williams, Heather Olson

## Mom chills

*Capricious 'kids' ride an emotional rollercoaster in Tere O'Connor's new pared-down "Frozen Mommy."*

By **SOPHIE ERNST**  
[Offoffoff.com](http://Offoffoff.com)

Tere O'Connor's "Frozen Mommy," a world premiere, veers between jolting moments of madcap glee and colder spaces that underscore a sense of solitude within a group. O'Connor touches on the treacherous, rollercoaster landscape of childhood itself. The five excellent, versatile performers charge through weighted silences, unpredictable bouts of generous, often unison dancing, rounds of screaming and singing, spoken word tirades, and offhand commentary against the backdrop of the Kitchen's denuded stage. The effect is at once funny and sad, a fine balance that O'Connor

manages to retain throughout; even when it feels that the piece is about to slide off into theatrical anarchy, he pulls it back into the realm of the human with a touch, a sigh, or a casual comment on nothing in particular.

Leaving behind the elaborate theatrics of his recent works, O'Connor pares down *Frozen Mommy* to the basics — simple, school kid costumes, a barren stage, and only one lighting cue at the very end of the piece. Coupled with James Baker and O'Connor's score, which combines clattering, droning and popping sounds with industrial, pulsing music, the result is a starkness that invites complete focus on the dancers. Like capricious children politicking in a schoolyard, they form attachments and alliances, then suddenly turn on and isolate each other without warning, splintering into girl and boy factions, then expanding into a noisy rabble.

## FROZEN MOMMY

Choreography by: **Tere O'Connor.**  
Written and directed by: **Tere O'Connor.**  
Dancers: **Hillary Clark, Erin Gerken, Heather Olson, Matthew Rogers, Christopher Williams.**  
Music by: **James Baker.**  
Sound design by: **Tere O'Connor, James Baker.**  
Lighting design by: **Brian Mac Devitt.**

## SCHEDULE

**The Kitchen**  
512 West 19th St. (btw. 10th and 11th Ave.)  
Dec. 2-11, 2004  
Tue.-Sat. 8pm, Sat. 2pm  
Tickets: \$20/\$16



**L-R: Christopher Williams, Hillary Clark, Matthew Rogers, Heather Olson**

"You assholes," lanky, pale, red-haired Matthew Rogers mutters as he tries to sing after an unsuccessful previous attempt resulted in derisive laughter. "Ah, oh," sighs the score as the rest dance away from him with quick backwards gallops and sharp twists

of the torso. Hilary Clark, a brassy, big-voiced blonde, belts out arias that descend into screaming bouts. "Sometimes you think that you think that you know sometimes," she sings, as the others pick it up and sing in a round while Heather Olson, her lovely, pre-Raphaelite face mysterious, twists at something in her abdomen, trying to push it away. Diminutive, dark-haired Erin Gerken tiptoes towards the back wall on bent legs before being swooped up by Rogers and passed off to compact, magnetic Christopher Williams. He cradles her, and then pulls her to the floor, where they roll around together before flinging themselves backwards as Rogers pulls them upright. Williams' hand encircles Gerken until she scuttles away, chirping like a bird. The dancers all deliver an

impressive depth and ease of movement, launching into rounded sequences of turns with legs outstretched or in attitude, and brisk trots interspersed with sustained balances, backs arched, chests open to the ceiling.

Towards the end, the children are getting sullen. The girls futilely try to prevent Rogers from pushing past them; when he breaks through, he walks with stiff legs, grunting, his body clenched with frustration, then pins Williams up against the wall before

wrapping him over his shoulder like a sack of dirty laundry.

"Love?" somebody snaps, as they all canter around the stage, legs astride imaginary horses. Then a lengthy silence descends, and the performers regard the audience for so long that we become aware of their blinking eyelids, except for Gerken's as she appears to have fallen asleep. Rogers collapses and the lights go partly out, fading slowly to the sound of his sobs. And the world seems very sad and very cold.

---

*Even when it feels that the piece is about to slide off into theatrical anarchy, O'Connor pulls it back into the realm of the human with a touch, a sigh, or a casual comment on nothing in particular.*

---

DECEMBER 11, 2004

OFFOFFOFF.COM • THE GUIDE TO ALTERNATIVE NEW YORK

---