The Performance Mix Festival continued its quirky and inspired ways for the 31st year, this time at University Settlement and Tribeca's New Dance Alliance.

Julian Barnett and Jocelyn Tobias, with Justin Cabrillos, continue to explore vocal options and onstage interactions with ODE2 FOOL. The result is usually mesmerizing and sometimes fascinating, always requiring audience attention and decision. Barnett and Tobias sing an eerie duet, for instance, full of half-step intervals and other "mistakes" that are both beautiful and jarring; the audience can focus on the sound or try to catch lyrics. Then Barnett and Cabrillos recite a list of what each has studied, first taking turns and then not so much, overlapping each other and prompting more
audience decision: focus on one only, try to catch everything, decide which studies are "true" and which are metaphysical or aspirational? Tobias creates a layered vocal loop with percussions and then dances a "ballet" solo to play against, or with, the music. The men do an articulate, disparate duet. There is a disjointed quality to everything but an overall feel of experience gained and nothing lost. Which makes the title that much more ambiguous; are we celebrating "foolishness", or are we "fool"?

Certainly Anya Liftig has no problem celebrating foolishness, and the audience loves her for it. With only a tent, a flashlight and a video camera, and a seemingly endless supply of tiny toys and miniature items, she has us watch a live video of her face and all the things that fall out of it, in Face Ballet. There is skill and artistry to what she is doing, but really she is fishing for belly laughs and reeling in a slew. Escalation plays a large part; each round of mouth-dribbling goes longer and introduces a more absurd combination of trinkets. Much of the humor is food-related, but scale, timing and juxtaposition add lots, too. By the time babies and spiders slide down strings of saliva, it's safe to say everyone is at least smiling heavily, and probably shaking their heads one direction or the other.

The revelation of the evening, and actually a separate show by itself, is Clara Furey and Peter Jasko's Untied Tales (the vanished power of the usual reign). To say I've seen nothing like this doesn't come close to being enough. IT FELT LIKE SOMETHING NEW.

Yes, any given moment had something recognizable, even familiar, even if it included massive physicality skillz. But the particular combination of stillness, ultraslow motion, violent shivering and emotionally loaded moments, in the context of a stripped-down stage and a complex musical space, really did demolish the power of the usual reign.

The two begin in an intertwined pile, asleep or still in a very comfortable place. Over many minutes, they budge, separate, and slip apart and together as if gravity were an irresistible force exerted by the walls and the floor and themselves rather than a static force of nature. By the time they have extricated themselves
Moments of contact are few now, but the force between the two has grown.

At some point, Furey and Jasko are strolling toward the audience and he shows that his pockets are empty. It is a beautiful moment of simplicity and humility, and humanity. When he checks again and finds two pieces of chalk, it becomes clear that that's all they need. One takes the white piece and one takes the black, and they draw "homes" for themselves. Negotiating the boundaries of these becomes an invisible but obvious element. When she carries him across the threshold of one, OUTSIDE, his beaming face is the first clear moment of joy, or emotion, we see. Whether it is hers or his hardly matters by now, remarkably, and eventually each spends time intentionally smudging and dispersing their house walls, and the issue is moot.

The connection between them, and their own boundaries, are equally strong and ambiguous, and we have no idea what the future may bring. Isn't that life?