

# TOTAL THEATRE REVIEW

## Zimmermann & de Perrot: Hans Was Heiri



We're all in control of our lives. Right? We are entirely unique. Right? We know who we are and where we're going. Right?

Told using dance, aerial work, live DJ-ing and an incredible central set piece, *Hans Was Heiri* reminds us that we are tiny little specks on this giant earth, not always in control. The world is turning and turning and we're just getting by, framed by our own circumstances, relationships and priorities.

Zimmermann & de Perrot create absurd, surreal masterpieces of visual theatre. *Hans Was Heiri* is no exception. Opening with de Perrot himself creating infectious loops and rhythms on a turntable, the piece is a sprawling landscape of the messy lives we lead. Puppet versions of the performers we later meet edge onstage, disappearing and appearing behind black screens that are whisked on and offstage. Legs are arms, wigs fill in for real heads, and short wooden stilts fill in for limbs here and there. Quietly, magically, they become real people, styled in geek-chic pastels. It's an amusing prologue to the central image of a giant box separated into four rooms.

This device becomes an incredibly impressive tool in which to hurl the seven strong cast literally upside down. As it slowly begins to rotate, the performers are forced to go with the flow. They walk themselves onto the ceiling, thump into the walls and cling onto the furniture to survive. Soon they begin to fall through doorways into each other's spaces, hilariously colliding and grabbing onto whatever they can. The most memorable and moving sequence sees a long-limbed seductress almost fall to her death again and again as she flings herself off the edges of the box in a beautifully performed aerial routine.

The piece is a winning mix of slapstick, contemporary dance, aerial choreography and comedy. Slick, yet loose and fluid ensemble movement explores the idea of how we strive to be individual yet are so similar to one another. In one of the only text-driven moments, a Y-fronts wearing yogi leads a crash course in bikram yoga. Squished into a tiny room the seven scantily clad bodies hilariously attempt to achieve inner harmony before the world starts turning again and they are piled on top of one another, all legs and arms, hair and feet. *Hans Was Heiri* is a glorious achievement: philosophical, laugh-out-loud funny, sad, edgy and thoughtful all at once. Plus, it's a consistently dazzling feast for the eyes and ears. What more can you ask for at the Mime Festival?

Terry O'Donovan / 23.01.2013