

Winning Entry

Review by Lottie H.

The Revisor: Crystal Pite and Jonathon Young

The dance-theatre hybrid born from two masters of their craft

No words go unseen.

Long time collaborators Pite and Young - choreographer and theatre-maker - renovate Gogol's play *The Government Inspector*. It's a well-worn satire, published in 1836, and eight performers brush off the dust by becoming real versions of their characters' psyche.

Using voiceovers from Canadian actors, the dialogue runs from dancers' lips, articulates their spines, and pulses with comic one-liners.

A narrator locates us 'somewhere in the interior'. We are inside a government outpost, in the midst of a suspected investigation by an Inspector from Head Office. When reports from the boss' wife suggest that there's an odd visitor in the West Wing, turmoil hits the complex. A corrupt bureaucracy will be exposed! It's your archetypal mistaken identity. This guest is but a minor clerk, who decides to use his assumed high position to his advantage.

Malleable caricatures jitter and jest, solidifying in a mold of ignorance, deceit and tyranny. It's like a playback of a surreal old film. With the melodramatic characterisation of a farce, every syllable juts a limb or leg with an out-of-body precision. I'm pulled into waves of laughter, mayhem and bribery; a familiar script revived by dance.

Then a sprint down another path.

Ella Rothschild as zany Minister Desouza appears cursed, breaking into a primitive solo, eagle-like and twitchy-headed like we're prey being stalked. Monotonous gibberish projects her about the space. Pite takes us from outside, inwards. The narrator reveals 'let's drop the charade': the guise is lifted.

Reset to the first act. This time no loud costume appears, and snippets of audio overlay an aching drone. The dancers pull from their speech and swallow it. Two become one. Left with bare bones, they pick at the fleshy score driving the movement. Track rewinds, static, light

shutters, is this revising?

Existential dread hangs in silence. Every shunt and stab feels droid-like but hyper-real, choreographically plugged into the mains. Topping this a nude, antler horned man-alien appears, encompassing the unearthliness of the scene.

Then we are back in the theatre. The zoom-in amplifies duality in our onstage personas. Postmaster Wieland - standout dancer Jermaine Spivey - distorts his body, spluttering the words of the Inspectors' leaving letter. He embodies the mantra "kill the comedy" warping and squirming across the floor. His revealing insanity overburdens the complex; darkness falls. Lighting gives one final electric current like a neuron sending information to the brain.

Wow. This deserves another watch.