

Feedback from Performances of "Passing Place"

Hanne Øverland: Artist -

I attended the "Mobile Homes" production called "Passing Place" at Dramatikkens Hus in Oslo in October 2010. I forgot that contemporary theatre can often seem bewildering and simply entered an arena of great creativity and artistic exploration. This was a rare experience and much more enriching than many of my other visits to the theatre. "Passing Place" is a fascinating, thought provoking and unpredictable production, accompanied by an intelligent use of sound, image and space.

The montage form adopted by the video film reminded me of silent movies with their additional texts and announcements of each chapter. The texts on the screen enabled us to go straight to the heart of the synopsis without tedious introductions or conclusions. The pianist blended gently into the surroundings. The music did not disturb the atmosphere already created by the silent film, but conjured up an additional space around it. This was also the case with the lighting, sound, voices and movement. There was a sense of symbiosis between the composite elements contained within the production, which made it much more than just a work of theatre: this was part theatre, part installation and part concert.

I shared 130 minutes with an ensemble eager to address a variety of themes; environmental issues, collective guilt and individual impotence. It was an impotence which sought solace in the dream of the untouchable hero and our tendency to romanticise the pure, untouched frozen landscape. This is a landscape which only the fittest and strongest manage to experience. I also heard messages depicting science's attempt to un-fathom these collective dreams, and a child's voice reminding us not to duck our collective responsibility for the oncoming environmental catastrophe.

These questions cannot be answered in an hour and a half. But that does not undermine such a worthy objective. On the contrary, I was uplifted by such a challenging experience and by entering this experimental space. It was a relief to leave the theatre, having just realised that I had *forgotten* that this was theatre. I was thinking about the questions put forward, not assessing the value of the acting or style of performance. That is what theatre should really be about, the creation of art, true performance and thorny debate.

Karstein Solli: Lecturer in Theatre and Theatre Communication -

...I found myself on a journey. “Mobile Homes” presented a convincing and unique use of video, text, music, sound and light. All these elements joined together in a unified and yet inter-disciplinary form. The entries and exits were very effective and framed precise scenes which build up a consistent plot and dramaturgy. There was an unspoken sense of agreement right at the start between stage and audience. This sense of inviting the audience in is evident from the outset with sectional titles such as “The Listening Room” and “The Archive”.

The video film balances and underpins each scene. It is clear that much work and background research has gone into the creation of this production. The video material is very rich and binds the entire performance together. The images are never a redundant backdrop or merely decorative. The images blend perfectly with the sounds in the production. The result is that the individual components blend together, yet still manage to stand out on their own.

Hans Petter Blad: Author-

...not least as a dedicated follower of James Clapperton is it possible to regard “Passing Place” as something which emerges from the music, particularly as the text, performance style, dramaturgy and themes are all bound together in a compositional manner. This enables the onlooker to get much closer to the logic behind the plot by making the production much more multi-dimensional. This befits the complexity of the overall message as well as its critique of contemporary society.

Unni Spakmo: College Lecturer -

...”Passing Place” really stayed with me. The performance was open and multi-layered. It seemed to reach out to the public and make you feel a part of the art which was being created. The images and sounds were for myself, a beautiful experience but also challenging... even threatening. The actors were highly committed throughout, striving simply to convey the meaning of the text. The use of old films, piano music and sound design were completely integrated into the performance. One came away with a clear vision which remained with me inside.