

Total Theatre –Volume 21/ Issue 02/ Summer 2009

Thrilling, exciting, provocative, sickening, challenging, wondrous... The list could easily continue, but you would have no idea what I was talking about. Although, going into Living Structure's performance experience *Cart Macabre*, it's advisable that you know as little as possible - to stay in the dark, you could say.

Upon arrival I was asked to empty my pockets and hand the contents over. I also willingly gave up my bag and jacket, and sat in anticipation. Laying on a wooden stretcher, being wheeled horizontally through the hip Shunt crowd, is like being in your own Hunter S Thompson-inspired film. Suddenly you are thrust into a pitch-black space, and guided to a seat in an even darker small box - a tiny cart which, over the next hour or so, is pushed along a track, spun around roller-coaster style, and rocked as if floating in the sea. Meanwhile, Living Structures present us with a series of film and shadow animations, tableau images, and mini-performances, viewed from shutters in front and behind, whilst haunting voices harmoniously sing tales of setting out to sea, or of the temporary nature of this life on earth.

There are some extraordinary images, the most poignant of which is a lone woman on a bed whom we watch as if above her, like a fly on the ceiling. The piece is an exhilarating exploration of the pointlessness of human existence, which asks big questions and answers them with startling images ranging from a sickening video of a pair of hands ripping up a heart to a delicate butterfly-puppet fluttering around a lone candle. An experience to be savoured.

Terry O'Donovan / Total Theatre