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Talk to the Demon

Published Thursday 15 May 2014 at 09:49 by **William McEvoy**

Director Wim Vandekeybus' UK premiere for his company Ultima Vez is ostensibly about demons, in the wider, dual sense of that word: the malign spirits of the Western imagination; the witch doctors, magicians and shamans from other cultures. From the start, it challenges the audience ethically and ransacks the imagination.

The work is about the perversity of childhood and the upending of hierarchy. It is a desocialised theatre in which two child actors take control of an adult world and run amok in it. A sumptuous theatre of images and sound emerges in which bodies convulse and bullying and brutality combine with beautiful, self-conscious stage metaphors. Lines cross, lines are almost crossed in this theatre of danger.

As an audience, we are confronted with our own complicity and inertia, accused of having no thoughts, ideas or music by children, clowns and dancers. The performers re-enact primal scenes of adults' physical and emotional abuse of children and by children: playground bullying, parental mind-games. The two child actors exact a stark and powerful revenge by unleashing their imagination.

Rarely does one see a piece of theatre so powerful and visceral. Beautiful images and extraordinary soundscapes imprint themselves on one's memory. The stage's unity is destroyed, its norms of order and logic subverted. The terror of childhood, the fascism of the way we normalise and control children and the redemptive power of fairytale and myth converge in a stunning piece of work that reverberates in the mind long afterwards.



Scene from Talk to the Demon at Brighton Dome
Photo: Danny Willems

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Production information

Brighton Dome Concert Hall, May 13-14

Author: Wim Vandekeybus and company

Director: Wim Vandekeybus

Producer: deSingel (Antwerp), KVS (Brussels), Archa Theatre (Prague), with support from De Grote Post (Ostend) and Brighton Festival

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Elena Fokina, Luke Jessop, Jerry Killick, Gala Moody, Yassin Mrabtifi, Manuel Ronda

Running time: 1hr 45mins

Production information displayed was believed correct at time of review. Information may change over the run of the show.

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Run sheet

Dome Brighton

May 13-14

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