

PERFORMANCE Hotel Pro Forma's *Theremin* wraps the onlooker into a painless anticipation of death

Blue-green sound

After *Theremin* the matter is resolved: sound waves cannot possibly be anything else than luminously blue-green – a mixture of etching-blue and arch-green...

Sound acquires colour in Hotel Pro Forma's new performance *Theremin*, and on stage images acquire sound when the hands of the performers hover above the electronic musical instrument 'the theremin' – the first ancestor of the synthesizer.

The inventor of the machine, Leon Theremin (1896-1993) is the main character in the performance, in which this overlooked heroic figure becomes a symbol of the 20th century cult of electricity.

Theremin was a composer, appearing on stage with his sound-wave compositions on triumphal international tours in the 1920s. In the late 1930s he returned to Russia, but was arrested by the KGB and sent to a labour camp in Siberia. He later returned to Moscow, where he was forced to develop eavesdropping equipment for KGB espionage purposes – it is quite likely that the KGB never let him out of sight until his death at the age of 97.

He himself never lost his belief that man could make himself immortal if only the right memory machine could be invented.

An anticipation of death

Once more, Kirsten Dehlholm and Willie Flindt have been highly ambitious and uncompromising in a performance that glitters with international self-esteem, though also with long, full lives. Death is important in *Theremin*, at least as important as life, and the blurred distance between sound and listening, between life and non-life, envelops the onlooker in a painless anticipation of death.

Michael Valeur's congenial, short text finds a distinctive, spherical flight of light symbols. 'I stretch out my hand – but it is as if he passes straight through it,' as it is said about Theremin's years as a spy.

A rush of the Milky Way

Steffen Aarving's scenography is similarly anonymous and very concise – with horizontal display screens and theremins in a row. And Anne Mette Sørensen has created sound-wave white coats, with a sense of colour straight into the heart of the sound lagoon.

But there can be no sound waves without a composer. Gert Sørensen has created a work that romps between electronic instants of beauty and acoustic cello scales for random child prodigies. Like a pillow of dream-sounds with nuances from the piercing notes of the nightmare to the blissful rush of the milky way.

The actress Sarah Boberg 'thereminises' the stories of 14 women connected to Theremin. Boberg has hardly ever been better than she is here – with a vocal precision that is just as supernatural as the waves she sends out into space. And with a sensual and yet impregnable body over the slender thighs. Around her, the dancer Bo Madvig conquers the space with perfect spy-duplicity in an unopenable identity coat, with four children seeking out the secret in the fundamental tone of the violin and the cello.

Throughout, Laurie Grundt considers this strange scene as the old (or already dying?) Theremin. In Grundt's fantastic facial furrows a mild surprise is expressed at the unpredictability of life. At a distance and, at the same time, right close to. And at any rate via light-blue-green sound.

BY ANNE MIDDELBOE CHRISTENSEN