

JESUS IN 2000 A.D.

Hotel Pro Forma: 'jesus_c._odd_size'. Concept by Kirsten Dehlholm and Gritt Uldall-Jessen. A cast of 50 from 7 different countries. Taking place at Malmö University, Beijerskajen 8 until 1st October.

THEATRE ◀◀◀◀◀◀

Hotel Pro Forma's new work is exhibition, show and experiment rolled into one. Above all, however, it is a great experience and discovery for any soul entering the labyrinth of stories about Jesus.

The work consists of 24 different 'simultaneous scenes' on the premises of Malmö University near the port. It is 'open' for three hours every evening, during which time you are free to walk around from basement to top floor and spend as much time as you like on each scene. But you are inside the work the whole time. Even when you're taking a breather on a sofa, one of the disciples can come over to talk to you. Or the leper rolls past on his board and looks up askance. A large museum, fascinatingly alive like a town.

The 24 scenes are everything from acting, singing choir, installation, coffee bar, performance and lecture with widely disparate people. They are all themselves, with their own knowledge and life story, as well as the role they have in the work, e.g.—and this is one of the jollier features—the disciples' grannies gathered in the coffee bar with candles and pictures of the young men, their grandchildren. Naturally enough, you sit down and chat.

ENUNCIATING TEXTS

One of the exceptions—and at the same time one of the main acts—is Gritt Uldall-Jessen's 'double monologue' with Ulla Henningsen as Maria Magda-

lene and Göran Dyrssen as Stephen, the first martyr. This is the closest we get to straight acting. In a shallow basin with two chairs and a ventilator as the only scenography, the two stroll around in thespian fashion, enunciating texts about Maria Magdalene's courage and suffering and about Stephen's visions. They do just that, enunciate texts—this is not the living word or silence, like all the others around the work. What cool distance it imparts, what un-neighbourly arrogance! What an instant guillotine to acting as a form of presence! The closest one gets to a cruel god.

For the whole of the rest of the work is present and correct. Erik A. Nielsen's fantastic lecture, e.g. where he is projected up life-size behind the lectern from a video gun in an auditorium and discharges a fount of meanings for 'the heart' in Christian culture. Or Helle Rafn's two Virgin Mary rooms: one for men, one for women only. Or the interactive confessional, where we all suddenly discover that we have something to confess. I could go on: there is more than ample for three hours.

ACCOMMODATING SPIRIT

Now it certainly comes as no surprise that Kirsten Dehlholm's Hotel Pro Forma is behind the creation of such a work. For the past 15 years the Copenhagen hotel has been inhabited by an accommodating and commodious spirit. Yet this jigsaw puzzle of Jesus images is a development, an extension of our notion of what a work of art can be. The artist has left control of the work in the hands of her public,

and each one is special, self-perceiving. Without resorting to gesticulating arms, I am actually hard put to formulate the joy it gave me to experience such a rewarding show. It transforms the mind into the little child that everyone knows you have to be in order to pass through the eye of the needle and into the kingdom of heaven. And when you're there, you discover there are people inside the people. Totally revolutionary in our time.

BY JANUS KODAL