

Sydney Morning Herald

Born out of the raw material of life

But what of the experience of *Operation: Orpheo* from Denmark's Hotel Pro Forma. This gut-wrenching beautiful work, a meditation on the Orpheus legend, offers us an experience, rather than a moral or a message. The work teases out key elements of the ancient story, elaborating them into hypnotic patterns based on the true irreducible fundamentals of the theatrical process: bodies moving in time and space. This most formal of works evolves from minimal beginnings into a dizzying enchantment based on the play of light across a highly architectural design, echoing ever more sophisticated musical patternings elucidated by composer Bo Holten out of themes by John Cage and Gluck.

Audiences were dumbfounded by the physical beauty of this work, though not all appreciated the extent to which director Kirsten Dehlholm applied these essentially technical resources to the myth. The work took me to the very timeless core of the legend – a cache of wisdom no words could describe. It is a great work of art which renders the critic useless. The conscious faculties of analysis had to be switched off before one could enter the work, a challenge I struggled with for some time. Only by opening up one's sensory apparatus entirely could the experience, like an electrical current slowly increasing in power, begin to flow. Without a doubt, one of the greatest experiences I have ever had in the theatre. A triumph equal, if very different in style, to this festival's other undeniable masterpiece, DV8's *Enter Achilles*.

James Waites