

THE STAGE

24.8.00 Reflective show forgets intuition

Edinburgh International
Festival:
Royal Lyceum

Cabin Pressure

There is something charmingly seductive about theatre examining itself as a subject and this is proved when several minutes into the show, the curtain falls, the actors take a bow and the lights come up on an immediately enthused audience.

However, what the audience doesn't know is that from this point on, they will be taken as the principle subject of this show. Led by the director Ann Bogart's plausible concept, SITI theatre company has been doing much serious research into the relationship between theatre and its audience, the result of which is presented here.

It is a theatrical rollercoaster, constantly shifting focus and points of view through a series of neatly connected extracts from various plays, amusing repetitions, variations on the theme and – unfortunately – philosophising. The company's research might be a useful tool to a deeper understanding of the creative process between the actors and the audience, on the basis of which something else could be built.

SITI theatre company, with its defined aesthetic approach and an obviously skilled cast, is definitely capable of it. Ann Bogart's spatial and movement direction is of the highest order, while the company's dramaturgs Adrien-Alice Hansel and Kae Koger accomplish their task admirably.

However, their decision to feed the research results back to the audience, often in a very overt and extremely patronising way, is entirely counter-productive. Not only does it overlook the fact that the relationship in question is primarily an intuitive one, but it ignores the main finding that the process in question is a creative rather than a deconstructive one. Seduction – yes, lecturing – no.

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