

Review

Caesarean Section: Essays on Suicide



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The lights don't go all the way down at the start of this piece. First, a woman draws chalk lines round her feet then steps aside for another to stand barefoot in them. When the blackout is complete, however, it is total, making the accompanying sounds of glass smashing even more fierce and the subsequent image of the barefoot woman, flailing in a desperate tango, unable to step out of the chalk footsteps for fear of treading on broken pieces, even more arresting.

This piece from Teatr ZAR carries us through visions of people nearing the tipping point of unbearable pain and flinching back from it with a religious quality of violence and beauty. The urgency of it often makes for discomfiting viewing and at times cuts to your blood. There's a shocking intensity to the dancers' bodies, crossing back and forth over a channel of illuminated broken glass, banging shoes against their chests, or slipping from the balancing point of a chair with brutal repetition.

At the heart of the score an elemental chorus based on polyphonic Corsican songs seems to rise from the earth. Nini Julia Bang in particular has the most strange and wonderful voice, sounding sometimes like she is singing in a cave or cathedral, while sublime lighting bathes every strained muscle of the performers' bodies in a spiritual glow. As a shaft of it pours down on dancer Kamila Klamut she reaches up, desperate to touch whatever salvation it might bring. In the final image, a broken pieta, her frozen silent scream is unforgettable.