

UP CLOSE TO THE PERSONAL IN LIFE

DANCE

PRIMERO-ERSCHT/ LES BALLETS C DE LA B

Lilian Baylis Studio

★★★★☆

SARAH FRATER

BEFORE company founder Alain Platel brings the full Les Ballets C de la B to Sadler's Wells next month, you have the chance to see a chamber-scale work by company member Lisi Estaras. Meaning first time, *Primer-Erscht* is very much what you'd expect from the innovative Belgium troupe who specialise in what's best described as found choreography. The movement you see on stage comes from the dancers and is close to its source – the staggerings of the drunk, the disjunctures of life, the palsies of emotional pain.

C de la B's trademark approach is to use these as a trigger for movement sequences in solos, duets and synchronised group dancers, usually with come-as-you-are costumes and old furniture for sets.

The emphasis tends to the agonised, and so it is with *Primer-Erscht*, although Estaras also includes considerable humour for her five dancers (including herself) and a foxy clarinettist. All look like young people sharing a student house (theirs is the interior realm) and recalling the first time they experienced something significant ... love, rejection, getting drunk, assorted traumas.

There's a skinny girl who appears to be remembering an unwelcome first kiss, a fair-headed man in the throes of sensual passion, and a chubby bloke remembering his first and many subsequent suicide attempts.

Short and to its point, *Primer-Erscht* is not as ingenious as other C de la B pieces, but it has a charm and unexpected comedy. The performers are, as ever, all excellent.

☎ Tonight only, 0844 412 4300, www.sadlerswells.com



Charm: Bérengère Bodin of Les Ballets C de la B performs *Primer-Erscht*