

Primer - Erscht

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With Primer, Lisi Estaras has created a nuanced and affecting work for the ever impressive Les Ballets C de la B. Estaras and four accompanying dancers power their way through a plethora of memories, which tumble from their bodies and mouths uncontrollably.

Surrounded by scattered wooden furniture, bed posts and low-hanging light bulbs we are taken to the world of childhood, with images flowing past us like a hazy photo album. Dressed in a frilly frock Berengere Bodin is a gangly little girl learning to walk and constantly collapsing before morphing into a grumpy grandfather shouting insults from his armchair. Samuel Lefeuvre tumbles across the stage as a competitive young boy losing games for the first time. In an arresting sequence Nicolas Vladylav drags bodies into a dead pile within a war-torn landscape and shrieks as if the world inside him is ending.

In a clever depiction of how memory fragments, these blood-curdling screams transform into the cries of a newborn baby. When the company begin to move as an ensemble Estaras allows each performer to personalise the unison movement, creating an environment in which experience is shared and understood rather than imitated.

Accompanied by an unusual and moving live clarinet by musician Yom, the piece is steeped in rich personal experience which is moving and deeply unsettling. At times the world becomes overly anarchic and loses its searing attack on the senses, at others it brilliantly evokes our attempt to constantly re-imagine and recreate those first-time feelings.

Production information

Sadler's Wells, Lilian Baylis Studio, May 5-7

Choreography: Lisi Estaras

Producer: Les Ballets C de la B

Cast includes: Berengere Bodin, Benny Claessens, Lisi Estaras, Samuel Lefeuvre, Nicolas Vladyslav, Yom

Running time: 70mins