Yama at Lowry Theatre

Reviewed by Matthew Dougall November 2016

Scottish Dance Theatre have again created a piece of stark and strong imagery, with imaginative, bold choreography in their latest piece, ***Yama***. As with much of contemporary dance, as there is no narrative or programme notes to work from, the story and meaning of the piece are left for you to interpret through your own individual experience of watching the piece. Here we were presented with a circular dais out of which the dancers came and eventually all went too.

It told, for me at least, the story of the creation of man, with a rather apocalyptic vision of our ending too. Using throbbing noises, deep and low sounds, with creative and effective lighting, the stirrings of life upon this planet start to appear, and through graphic orgiastic copulation, they multiply and prosper. They are 'the Yama'. Eventually they start to wear clothing and their featureless faces become human as their long, golden locks are shed. We all then die one by one.

I mentioned the hair. All the cast were semi-naked at the beginning of the piece save a stockinged mask obliquing their features and all wore a wig of matted long blond hair making them look identical, and also otherworldly. The hair needed choreography all of its own!

Created and choreographed by **Damien Jolet**, this was a visually stunning and captivating piece. Lasting just shy of 60 minutes, it was a tour-de-force for both performer and audience, as we simply couldn't take our eyes from the stage. I loved the 'pictures' created using Far Eastern ideas of body images, and the lighting and music was perfect throughout creating a background of complementary sound and lightscapes. And of course the dancing itself was utterly mesmerising.

The dancers were **Francesco Ferrari**, **Amy Hollinshead**, **Jori Kerremans**, **Oscar Perez**, **Audrey Rogero**
,
James Southward
,
Aya Steigman
, and
Astrid Sweeney
.

Scottish Dance Theatre's style is unique, vibrant, and always utterly fantastic - in *both* senses of

this word. If you haven't yet had the privilege of seeing this company in action, I recommend you don't waste time, and get along to see them, as you will not be disappointed.