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REVIEW

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*Do-Theatre**'Hangman'**August 2007**Edinburgh, Aurora Nova**by Ian Palmer*

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If I am to see anything as quirky and as enjoyable as Do-Theatre's *Hangman* this year, then I will not believe it. These previous Fringe First winners came from Russia to Aurora Nova to present something so deliriously fantastical that I should like to see it again.

Someone, somewhere is to be hanged and as the show proceeds we are shown criminal acts, their victims, judges and executioners and at one point a hilarious Basil Fawlty-ish waiter who serves two drunken customers the brains from within a man's head. At the stage's side a gallows is being built and the show is proceeding towards this closing moment, when a doll is hanged from it. Images fleet across our consciousness with astonishing and imaginative power – books which are swung and seem to become as seagulls flying out to

sea; a lamp which swings across a table almost hitting the head of the dancer across from it before he just ducks or lies back to avoid it; two tail suits which descend on a clothes lines into which two dancers climb.

There is something hypnotic about the work – the way in which its thread of theatre and dance, its eclectic score, draws you into a world in which all these bizarre activities become surreal logic. Will the crimes ever be punished? In this cock-eyed world we can never be sure.



Do-Theatre's *Hangman*

© Andreas Herrmann

The precision of the dancers, their comic timing and their sudden shifts into deepest pathos (in *commedia del'arte* manner) garnered my admiration. Here was theatre at its most vivid and alive. Exactly the kind of show we expect and want to see at the Edinburgh Fringe. It was a mini-marvel.

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