

MAX LOPPERT

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Ritual - 'a prescribed order of performing religious or other devotional service' (Shorter Oxford Dictionary). The Ritual Theatre would not, I imagine, claim that theirs is a service, or that it is religious in any commonly held sense. Nevertheless, during their hour-long 'rite' last night, I sensed a 'prescribed order' behind their musico-dramatic happening that made it an interesting and enjoyable experience.

The stages of the ritual can, at the beginning, be quite clearly perceived: the auditorium darkened to the lighting of burners; a slow emanation of susorrous rustles and rattles from all six players (shades of the portentous mystery caused by the opening tremolo in any Bruckner symphony); then noises - animal, guttural, gradually musical - with the lights rising; improvised interplay of sounds, imitative and suggestive, between musicians and actors, until music takes over and the actors move into physical, even balletic gesture, to flesh out what had been outlined in sound. The musicians are, as improvisers, very good indeed.

In the interplay between instruments and voices, flute and violin fluttered, arabesqued and keened over cello drones or pizzicati finesse (my ear caught some very strange - and very pleasant - now-Bergian, now-Shostakovian sounds. The experience served as an hour of aural massage not to be despised a minute away from Trafalgar Square.