

Written by [Sarah Wells](#)

Friday, 27 February 2009



As we sat and made ready for *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, I had to lean over and say to my companion, "This production truly has the potential to be tremendously good or tremendously bad." And she agreed. After all, young UK company **1927**'s blend of black and white film, animation, pancake make-up, live piano and vaudevillian comedy is pretty ambitious.

And then the lights went down for the arrival of *Choo Choo le Chat* and the story of her 9 deaths, and I was immediately and entirely seduced by this Gothic playground.

Tales of Gingerbread revolution, little-rich-girls playing "homeless" for kicks, housewives being delivered of festive parcels of the Clap, angels, demons, evil twin sisters and their unfortunate grandmother, and a monkey in a mirror round out the **1927** repertoire of satirical quasi-comic nastiness. Truly these are stories unlike any you'll see for a long time, and a wonderful blend of nostalgia and ultra-modernity.

Dark, hilarious, melodic, slightly grotesque and utterly charming, this piece is one of my favourites of the year. **Suzanne Andrade's** deliciously macabre prose delivered in husky plum-accented tones is an absolute treat and **Lillian Henley's** antequy musical stylings bring pitch-perfect atmosphere and tension. **Paul Barritt's** projected animations and films are wonderful, at times taking centre-stage, at times ideally punctuating the poetry.

The most impressive part of the piece, though, is the synchronicity of the performers, both with the projections, and each other. Obviously the timing regarding the animation must be perfect, as there is no ad libbing to be done by a film, but in addition to this **Andrade** and fellow performer/costume designer **Esme Appleton** are flawless in their tandem delivery, their comic cadence and their articulation of the complicated prose.

Their daring even stretches so far as to include a lovely little slice of audience participation necessitating an unsuspecting theatre-goer get involved in the live-to-film crossover without much margin for error and this, too, they pull off effortlessly.

If I am to lament for anything in this performance, it is that it is too short.

It's *Emily the Strange* meets Charlie Chaplin meets Oscar Wilde meets Nick Cave, and I loved it. See it.

1927 present

Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea

Written & Directed By Suzanne Andrade

Part of the 2009 Perth International Arts Festival

Venue: Playhouse Theatre

Dates/ Times: Thur 26 Feb–Sun 1 March, 7.30pm; Tue 3–Sat 7 March, 7.30pm

Duration: 55min no interval

Tickets: A Reserve \$45/Friends \$40 B Reserve \$35/Conc \$30 C Reserve \$25

Bookings: 9484 1133 perthfestival.com.au Festival Info 6488 5555