

Caesarian Section: Essays on Suicide – review

Summerhall

★★★★★



Lyn Gardner

guardian.co.uk, Thursday 16 August 2012 18.30 BST

It begins in a darkened tent with the tick of a metronome, the shriek of wild laughter, the stamping of feet and the shattering of glass. The broken shards create a ribbon of pain across the playing area in Theatre Zar's extraordinary meditation on the suicidal impulse, a show that lodges like a splinter in the brain. With Rob Drummond's [Bullet Catch](#) at the Traverse offering a teasing and ultimately moving consideration on performance as an act of self-annihilation, this memorable piece of Jerzy Grotowski-influenced Polish dance-theatre offers another, no-less-pungent take on the urge to self-destruct and the survival instinct pulling us back from the brink.

**Caesarian Section:
Essays on Suicide**
Summerhall,
Edinburgh

Until 20 August
Box office:
0845 874 3001
[Venue website](#)

While this is no barrel of laughs, it's less of a downer than you might expect, because essentially this show is a catalogue of failure – though there is absolutely no failure in its execution. Two women and a man prowl and circle each other in shadow dances of unbearable intimacy, offering a repeated image of climbing and falling and climbing again. Red wine stains the floor like blood, and at one

moment a woman appears to drop broken glass into her eyes, some of it trickling down her cheeks like dangerous tears. There is pain – but a sense, too, that these people are survivors, clinging to life with a grip that may be fragile, but which can't be loosened.

The lighting is all deep pools and lengthening shadows, and through it all runs a river of liquid polyphonic sound (with a dash of ragtime), drawing on songs from Corsica, Chechnya, Bulgaria and Romania. The overall effect is immersive, as sound and visuals tumble against each other. It feels as if the performers have peeled away every layer of skin, exposing their very souls.