

The Magic of Surreal Acrobatics

Company Finzi Pasca's *La Verità* is a must-see show featuring a long-lost scrim painted by Dalí.

The mere chance to catch a glimpse of the magnificent stage backdrop painted by Salvador Dalí in the 1940s for *Tristan and Isolde* would be good enough a reason to go see *La Verità*, by Daniele Finzi Pasca, at the Auditorio Adela Reta. Yet the Swiss director and his company offer their audience a unique blend of images, bodies and sounds that stands up to the work of the Catalan painter.

La Verità, opening this Thursday at Auditorio Nacional del Sodre, and running until May 11, is a must-see production, maybe one of the finest presented in the country this year.

Montevideo is the second stop for the troupe after the world première in Montreal, Canada. The Dalí-painted scrim, measuring 9 x 15 meters, can additionally be admired May 6 through 11, from 11AM to 5PM at the Eduardo Fabini del Sodre Hall, where a few conferences will also be given.

The acclaimed choreographer and clown's company – he is the man behind the Theatre of the Stroke and Cirque du Soleil's *Corteo* – offers much more than a first-grade acrobatics show; *La Verità* is a theatrical puzzle in which all the pieces seem to combine naturally. Songs and music also blend into the ensemble, led by a razor-sharp direction (lighting, sets, acrobatic apparatus, costumes).

Dalí's surrealism is used as a counterpoint in *La Verità*, with various elements referencing the work of the painter. In one particular scene, a woman pushes a bull-shaped chariot while a

man performs acrobatic figures up on crutches, while other segments feature actors wearing emblematic rhinoceros heads. This animal is a key figure in the Catalan's iconography, as well as in the surrealist movement at large, recalling a major work by playwright of the absurd Eugène Ionesco.

But the oneiric world of Finzi Pasca also embraces the story of Tristan and Isolde, the lovers brought to their demise by a love potion. The echoes of their tragic passion resonate in a scene where a duet of acrobats performs on a triangular aerial apparatus. Their bodies' dialogue brings to mind the famous words of poet Oliverio Girondo "They tangle, they twine, they segretage / They languish, they lapse, they reintegrate / They wriggle, they squirm, they infundibulate".

Between the acrobatic numbers, two clowns attempt to demystify Dalí's backdrop. "It has two long tears", "There are giant ants", "I'll call a friend to have it touched up", they joke in their Italian-tainted Spanish. Their scenes are funny, though one of them – where they pretend shooting at the audience from large tubes wielded from below their waist – isn't up to par with the rest of the show.

The comedic mode of the opening number may not be all that convincing either, though it does not prevent *La Verità* from alternating acrobatics, theatre and humour in a very efficient way. Those well tuned parts are those in which the vaudeville goes decadent, reminiscent of peculiar characters à la David Lynch. This is where the sturdy ballerina in a red tutu – played by Spanish-born David Menes – enters, boasting an impressive range of both acting and acrobatic skills.

Unforgettable images

Finzi Pasca creates here a gallery of unforgettable images and sounds: the enchanting rendition of the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* played on wine glasses; the poignant swing of a trapezist while an air of opera

fills the concert hall, or the three young acrobats spinning about on curved ladder-shaped apparatus recalling Möbius strips.

Act 2 opens introducing a spectacular metallic device in a breathtaking display of timing and fantasy.

One of the greatest scenes may be the one where acrobats take turns performing routines at the pole, while the backdrop moves about, bathed in light and shadows. The image it creates is so powerful that the spectator barely pays attention to the performers, and gazes away at a scrim that seems to embody his memories. Suddenly, he recalls an afternoon at the beach with some friends, or the concentric waves of the ocean under the radiant sun. *La Verità* is much more than an acrobatics show; it is a constant interplay between dreams, memory and poetry, that is sure to delight those who still believe that life is a dream worth dreaming.