

TRAMWAY, GLASGOW

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DESPITE its obvious qualities, the latest work by Compagnie Didier Théron is to be endured, rather than enjoyed. At 55 minutes, *HARAKIRI* is just about tolerable - any longer and it may well have become unbearable. This has nothing to do with it being unimaginative or slow, and everything to do with the remarkable level of intensity, both visual and aural.

The opening sequence, although performed in complete silence, sets the scene. A solo female dancer wrestles with her demons, physically miming the act of hara-kiri with an invisible knife. At the side of the stage, five dancers wait for their challenge to begin. I say challenge, because as a choreographer, Didier Théron knows how to punish his dancers.

All six move like a swarm, travelling from one corner to the other as a united whole. Arms fly in different directions, but almost all the movement is a variation on a theme, making it even more impressive that the dancers never forget a step or fall out of time. Especially given the music, reminiscent of a monster devouring a generator, has no discernible cues.

Occasionally, one dancer peels off to perform a solo expression of inner torment while the others shuffle aimlessly, giving everyone - them and us - a brief respite from the relentless yet compelling synchrony.

This was the third visit to New Territories - part of the International Festival of Live Art - for this intriguing French company, and I hope we'll see them again. Once we've had a chance to recover, that is.

KELLY APTER