

# Nuances of darkness

By Thomas Olsson

**Hertz** by Sidney Leoni

Stage: Dansens Hus, Small stage

City: Stockholm

Music: Kjetil Brandsdal, Morten J Olsen, Jonathan Uliel, Barbosa Saldanha, Frédéric Alstadt

Lighting: Jan Fedinger

Sound: Frédéric Alstadt

Costumes: Jennifer Defays

Advisors: Mette Ingvarstsen, Christine de Smedt, Andros Zins-Browne

On stage: Kjetil Brandsdal, Martin Lervik, Sidney Leoni, Stina Nyberg, Morten J Olsen, Jonathan Uliel, Barbosa Saldanha, Sandy Williams

## REVIEW/DANCE.

In **Hertz**, dancer and choreographer Sidney Leoni continues to challenge and explore the audience's imagination. Nummer's Thomas Olsson finds himself in complete darkness at Dansens Hus.

**Quite how the stage looks** or where those who seem to be moving on stage actually are remains shrouded in mystery. Throughout *Hertz*, we namely find ourselves almost in total darkness. The audience, divided into two groups, is guided into the Small stage at Dansens Hus by a few of the actors.

**Once there**, we are all given a place to sit during the performance. This differs from Sidney Leoni's previous 'dark' performance *Undertone* in 2010 (experienced at Weld in 2011). In that performance, members of the audience themselves had to cautiously feel their way around and experience the space which was manipulated by sound, breezes, humidity, heat and smells as well as direct physical contact.

**Although an equally** sensual experience as *Undertone*, *Hertz* is not based on an equally high level of trust and cooperation in an unfamiliar environment. That makes it less shocking. Nevertheless, you cannot simply lean back in your seat and take in what is happening. Circumstances such as sound masses and faint lights in the dark sharpen your senses. The tiniest of light slivers is noted and every perceivable movement or gust of wind provides clues to what is really going on in the dark. Rhythmic pounding with something that sounds like pieces of wood and noisy drumming in heavy vibrating soundscapes shake the bleachers where the audience is sitting, impacting how the room is perceived.

**Initially**, all we see in *Hertz* is the actor's faint red pilot lights. But our eyes soon adapt and start discovering different nuances of darkness. And the darkness goes from being so dark that you can't see your own hand when you hold it in front of your face to that the other members of the audience appear as dark silhouettes.

**In Hertz**, Sidney Leoni shows how a lack of visual input heightens our ability to perceive sound. And how, with the help of sound and other clues, we try to put together an understanding of the spatial environment. Indeed, the strength of Leoni's work lies in how it activates our imaginative or delusional powers.