



📷 Blaas by Schweigman &. Picture: Geert Snoeijer, supplied by Adelaide Festival

FESTIVAL

Adelaide Festival review 2019: Blaas

Patrick McDonald, The Advertiser

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Blaas

Theatre/Netherlands

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

Thomas Edmonds Opera Studio, Adelaide Showgrounds

March 2 to 10

In a cavernous, sanatorium-like void, a pile of white crumpled fabric begins to move as if it is breathing.

It slowly inflates as the droning background noise also escalates, to form a giant 3D polygon that recalls the monolith from *2001: A Space Odyssey* – except this one begins to rock, then roll ominously forward.

This is an alien life form, and we are about to make first contact.

As it billows and bounces around the floor and walls, the creature seems just as curious about – and apprehensive of – us as we are about it.



📷 Blaas by Schweigman &. Picture: Karin Jonkers, supplied by Adelaide Festival

To state what happens next would be to give too much away. Suffice to say that the “&” in Netherlands company “Schweigman &” is the audience, which finds itself quite literally absorbed into the sensory performance space and becomes a vital part of the interactive environment.

Blaas is Dutch for “blow” or “breath” but also for “bubble” and “bladder”. Eventually, our alien friend’s cries summon another, huge leviathan and we find ourselves in the belly of the whale.

Safely cocooned from the elements which buffet and batter its exterior, the audience finds refuge in a serene sanctuary before effectively being “reborn” into the outside world.

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It is a wonderful, immersive experience, and suitable for young theatregoers who will see their own inquisitive and playful natures reflected in the creature’s behaviour.

– Patrick McDonald

