

The Herald, 08/08/03

If numbers make the world go round, Suspect Culture know how they add up more than most. Through a series of delicately opaque little narratives, a young man and a young woman trawl through the throbbing heart of the city, laying bare their obsessions to get to each other. Crucially, the pair take their cue from the music they hear, not just in their heads, but made flesh as a live gigging band. The ensuing dramatic cycle melds video, postmodern performance art techniques, and the aforementioned band, OSKAR, to create a tender, haunting and unique experience.

On one level One-Two is Suspect Culture returning to the meditative inquiry of earlier defining works such as Timeless, awash as it is with a similar set of sense memories conjured up by personal totems and forget-me-nots. On another, in a slick, uber-hip delivery, they're extending their performance vocabulary to embrace a language culled from the European avant-garde, where generic boundaries aren't so set in stone.

The music, needless to say, is gorgeous, a delicious series of impressionistic vignettes rooted in both pop and classical sensibilities. Composer Nick Powell and his compatriots in OSKAR, Jonny Dawe, Ruth Gottlieb, and Sarah Willson, become the engine room of Graham Eatough's slickly marked-out production, sound-tracking the pulsebeat to performers Faroque Khan and Sharon Smith's interior monologues, which are in turns reflective or else a crazed cacophony. Such intimate exchanges are so rare, a good, long soul-searching walk is the only required response to this most daring of works. Suspect Culture occupy a special space where body and soul attempt to coexist beyond any perceived communication breakdown. If they didn't exist, we'd have to invent them.

The List, August 2003

One, two – it's the words used by roadies to check the mics and by drummers to count in the songs. Now it's the pulse of Suspect Culture's experiment in rock-theatre fusion. Neither a gig nor a play – and not even the dog's dinner you might have expected – Graham Eatough's production is built around the live music of Nick Powell's OSKAR, using alienated video projections and two similarly alienated actors spouting typical Suspect Culture reflections. Not sure what it all adds up to – and it doesn't help that the script withers away before the end – but the music is mesmerising and the whole evening has a seductive rhythm, enhanced by the novelty of an experiment successfully carried out.

Mark Fisher