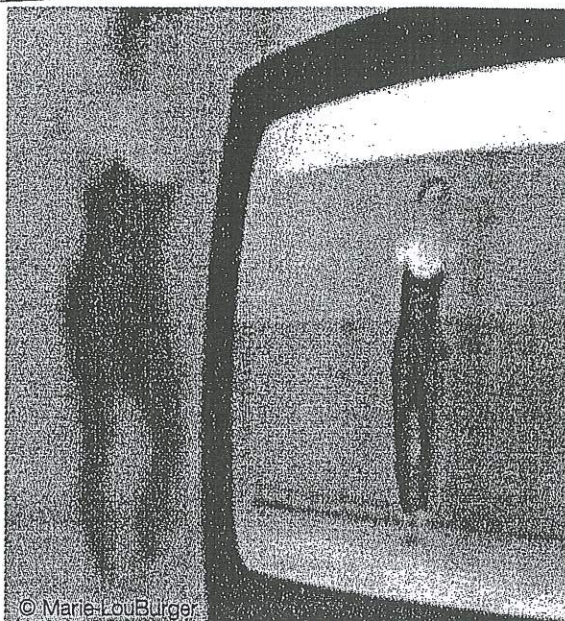

The Guardian



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The Guardian recommends

Boris Charmatz: théâtre-élévision

Exciting, a little scary, thrilling, unique, théâtre-élévision is also a one-person show. One person in the audience, that is. For only a fiver, you get to spend 50 minutes alone with the work of Boris Charmatz, a young French choreographer who made his festival debut in 1999 in a more traditional setting, on stage. He returns with a surprise package.

Tickets are timed on the hour. On entering a darkened room, you are invited to lie on a black cushioned platform - echoes of the psychiatrist's couch or the examination table. The usher leaves, having pointed out the panic button. It's an unsettling moment.

Technology whirring, tiny dancers above, you feel a bit like Gulliver, tickled but slightly fearful as you are surrounded. Forget conventional TV viewing. Forget the proscenium arch. This is a new way to experience a performance. Charmatz choreographs light, sound, people and a piano to extraordinary effect. He fits dance into the box by keeping the movement controlled in a tight space. Barking and panting like dogs, tongues hanging out, laughing hysterically, yelping or whispering, the company provides an intimate, sometimes funny, voyeuristic, adrenaline-boosting experience. And when harmony is finally achieved, it's uplifting.

The Hub, until Aug 31