

Electrifying opus transports to another place and time

Reviewed by Julia Cotton

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Mesmerising ... Victoria Hunt draws on her rich Maori heritage in *Copper Promises: Hinemihi Haka*. Photo: Heidrun Lohr

COPPER PROMISES: HINEMIHI HAKA

**Carriageworks, May 5
Until May 12**

VICTORIA HUNT spent a decade researching and drawing on her rich Maori heritage in preparation for this performance.

It is a stunning production - a solo movement/butoh/dance performance with strong technical support in lighting, sound and projection. Hunt's dance is at once organic, suggestive of primordial times, and electrifying. It is as if she is channelling the spirits of her ancestors and the very land they come from.

Her movement skills are impressive, ranging from lightning fast to incredibly controlled, and the imagery takes the audience to another place and time.

She begins in a cross light with jagged lights projected behind her and at once we are made aware of the elements. In the next section, she is, at times, barely visible and we get only glimpses of her moving through long shafts of diagonal light along the floor.

As this gradually builds, her movement is mesmerising - she has the ability to isolate parts of her body and create a dislocated kind of physicality.

The seismic sound effects build from a deep rumbling to a terrifying climax and we feel the effect of a volcanic eruption before an eerie stillness and quiet descend.

Shafts of light from above, as dust gently floats downwards, create a beautiful effect, reminiscent of underground caves or thick forests, until, accompanied by a strange creaking, it seems as if the earth is still shifting.

These images and Hunt's ability to simultaneously be the force behind them and be affected by them creates an amazing synergy between the organic, visceral movement and the highly technical elements.

Hunt has a powerful presence and the fierce haka is a strong contrast with the serene composure of her final walk forward. This final move is one of deep reverence, her connection with her heritage is profound and the final image is a true coup de theatre.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/dance/electrifying-opus-transport-to-another-place-and-time-20120508-1yas2.html#ixzz1uazsduk6>