

The Last Supper

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★ Recommended

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Eat, drink and be mortal (not that you can help it)

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What would be your last meal? What words would you leave lingering on your lips as you departed the world of the living? We'd all like to be memorable or notable at some point, even if it's the last point.

The Last Supper is a performance work that obliquely explores notions of death, (im)mortality, fame, infamy, legend, myth. It's difficult to pick apart exactly how it explores those things, because its form is deceptively simple. Thirty-nine dinner guests/audience members join three performers at a square of dinner tables. (You get free wine with the show.) The performers raise a toast. They read a litany of alleged last words and death scenarios of famous and not famous people. They present the last meal requests – in actual, proper-food form – of 13 prisoners who faced the death penalty to 13 members of the audience. They eat apples and the words of those who have died. It is more like a Catholic mass than a play (or are Catholic masses more like plays than religion?)

Perhaps it was the wine (imbibed after 28 days off the demon drink for this critic) but while certainly imperfect, incomplete even, *The Last Supper* is strangely mesmerising. There's not much shape, no crisis or climax, just the gentle, repetitive waves of stories familiar and strange lapping up at your feet. Were Humphrey Bogart's last words really "I shouldn't have switched from whiskey to martinis"? Were Jesus Christ's last words really "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do"? One is about as verifiable as the other.

For all the constant assertions from theatre makers and directors that their work is 'interactive' or 'audience-centered', it's rare to find one that strikes such a poignant balance between needing an intimate audience and managing not to alienate them. *The Last Supper* is a little fuzzy around the edges, but it's the kind of fuzz that holds your attention for days after.

Part of Performance Space's [Matters of Life and Death](#) festival at [Carriageworks](#).

Words by Rebecca Saffir