

TOTALTHEATRE

Reckless Sleepers A String Section

Lisa Wolfe

Four very different looking women, four different styles of black dress, four different types of black shoes, four different dining chairs, and four saws – all the same. From B&Q.

Holding eye contact and draped elegantly over their chairs, like classical musicians summoning a muse, the quartet slowly pick up their instruments and begin to saw at their chair legs.

There is no music other than the sounds they make, human and mechanical. There is no mood lighting and no clear subtext. They are doing what they are doing. All four are dancers so there is a consciously fluid and shapely quality to the movement and they are self aware, complicit in the ridiculousness of their task. Within its loose structure there are bursts of frantic action and moments of still reflection, a rhythm. They are timing themselves by a clock on the wall. We begin to see different personalities and approaches: the cheeky one, the flamboyant one, the sedate one. It's almost like a girl-band.

As the chairs reduce in height, and saws flail about, and legs go akimbo, the audience giggles and sighs in turn. When will they stop? Chainsaw anyone? But end it does, the women sweating demurely, the task completed to their own satisfaction.

This is a curious piece. It is totally open to interpretation. For Maddy Costa, writing in the Guardian, it was a powerful reflection of the role of women in society – she saw in it the harshness of domesticity, a statement about pornography and the birth of her two children. It did not affect me so directly, but thoughts bubble up over the 45 minutes – it's like a short durational piece. Do women compete like men and was their technique occasionally rubbish on purpose? Are they in control or being coerced? Are we all failing and falling and doing purposeless things to fill our days? *A String Section* poses questions, and that is the aim of Reckless Sleeper's Mole Wetherell's work; he puts it out there and lets us make of it what we will.

Devised by Leen Dewilde, and performed by her and three others, it was an interesting experience, and very watchable.