



The Overcoat

Published Tuesday 24 March 2009 by Nuala Calvi

Marking the 200th birthday of Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, physical theatre company Gecko brings its inimitable style to bear on his short story *The Overcoat*.

The tale of a bleary-eyed office worker bogged down in bureaucracy and jeered at for his scruffy attire lends itself surprisingly well to this blend of choreography, comedy and visual poetry.

The crushing routine of the office is turned into a hilarious dance of phone-answering and document-stamping, while status jostling is brought menacingly to life as desks are pumped up, along with egos on hydraulic platforms.

Gecko excels in creating small moments that capture wordlessly the individual's emotional struggle - Akaky battling against a crowd of bustling newspapers that seem to suggest the whole world is against him, as they assault him on the street; his parents' faces at the window of his tiny bedroom apparently overlooking and judging everything he does.

There's no doubting the inventiveness of the piece, nor the talent of the multinational cast, many of whom are dancers and bring a level of poise and precision to the performance far above most other physical theatre companies.