

Translation of the review by Anne Midelboe Christensen in the Danish newspaper "Information"
November 4, 2004

Scurvy with Bel Canto

Sejer Andersen delivers a beautiful death dirge to Vitus Bering's gangrenous body

Gangrene has taken his legs - and scurvy has taken the rest. So as he sits there, buried in his hole on the beach to keep warm, he only has the stars to talk to. And the arctic foxes, of course, hoping to find real corpses, not just a half-dead explorer ...

The painful, lethal putrefaction which overtook Vitus Bering in 1741 is the starting-point of Gregers Dirckinck-Holmfeld's dramatic monologue *And Here I Lie*, like some *Damned Idiot* ... Actor Sejer Andersen has produced the tour on which he himself puts in a tremendous performance as the 60-year-old Vitus Bering. With cadaverous hands and frost-bitten cheeks and stomach cramps, and with tough pains showing, in macho fashion, in the corners of his mouth. He emerges from the snow-covered sand with the angry upper part of his body and with his anxiety; here even a wolfskin coat will not protect you from the deadly gale.

Magical Music

The internal storm mixes with the sound of Bo Holten's magical music - a kind of a requiem for summer meories from the beach...the notes follow Bering's nightmares and his wishful dreams. He finds the stellar constellations, one after the other while the female voices find the notes, one after the other in little, cheerful ah's. Until the men "bass in" with darker milky ways in more distant keys.

Down-to-earth words

It is a remarkably beautiful fusion of tones and words - against Lin Utzon's drafts of an enervated Bering. Strangely enough, his death throes are very soothing. And *Musica Ficta's* nine singers perform with an angelic purity and a weightlessness that envelops Sejer Andersen's buried desperation protectively. What could one call it? Perhaps a musical death dirge. But, anyway, it is a spell-binding and poetic bel canto on an international level about one of Danish history's toughest men. This Bering belches out with down-to-earth words about being afraid, and with political taunts about the Czar's insanity. And he whispers soft words about his Anna, too...

From his own island at the end of the world he dreams himself back to her and to the church bells at Horsens Fjord (where he had his childhood). But, as the world conqueror admits about the isles of Alroe and Hjarnoe out there in the horizon: "I have never been so far out."

"And here one is lying like some other idiot..." by Gregers Dirckinck-Holmfeldt.

Composer and conductor: Bo Holten,

Choir: *Musica Ficta*.

Scenic concept and actor: Sejer Andersen. Direction: Thomas Bendixen.

Performed in Lyngby Kulturhus. On the road.