

DANCE

**GELABERT AZZOPARDI
COMPANYIA DE DANSA
EDINBURGH FESTIVAL
THEATRE**

★★★★★

AS THE curtain rises and the house lights go down, the Festival Theatre is plunged into a blackness, far darker than usual. Then, slowly, a shadowy figure appears, moving silently through the space as if nobody is watching. It's Cesc Gelabert, one of the world's most unique talents and the man responsible for tonight's joyous celebration of dance.

There is something so natural and liberating about Gelabert's choreography, that allows his dancers a wonderful freedom of expression. Watching them, and him, fill the space with expansive movement, brings about a sense of pleasure few dance companies can match.

Opening piece, *Sense Fi* finds ten performers in simple streetwear, with no two dancers dressed the same. It's a sign of what lies beneath – an individuality that shows in every step. Abstract yet atmospheric, the work is laced with high leaps and leg extensions, showcasing the strong technique that underpins this talented Spanish company.

In the second half, *Conquassabit* shows just how in-tune Gelabert is with music. So much of the choreography acts like a physical manifestation of Handel's powerful vocals, it's as if the words are dancing.

By mixing a Baroque score with clever modern dance, fused together by a set design that nods in both directions, Gelabert crosses the line between old and new and takes everyone with him.

KELLY APTER

Ends Sunday