

The Guardian Wednesday October 30 1996

THEATRE

Something American

Lancaster / Touring

REMOTE VIEWING (RV) is a form of extra-sensory perception which allows users to see what is going on at any location on the globe using only the power of the mind. Does it work? The CIA, FBI and the American military thought there was sufficient evidence to run trial RV programmes during the 1970s and 1980s.

In this latest piece, which should win new fans for the brash young performance company Blast Theory, the idea of observing something from a distance using a combined imaginative and psychic process becomes a metaphor for our relationship to America. As the company demonstrates, we experience America on a daily basis — but only via the media.

Something American is a travelogue in which nobody goes anywhere

about a place that is constructed entirely through the consumption of its culture. It is an America of Elvis Presley impersonators, the Gulf war, bruised cops, Schwarzenegger movies and the best-ever movie explosions all played out against a wide screen that traverses the stage and conjures the geography and state of mind of Malboro Country.

An actor slowly tries on a cop uniform for size; Alan Rickman's bad boy villain bursts on to the screen and hurtles through the air; a column of burnt-out Iraqi tanks and trucks, engulfed in a flash of flame on the road to Baghdad, swims hazily in to view. There is nothing coherent about the way you experience Something American, but its slash and paste, comic-book, pop-culture approach belies the underlying rigorousness that consistently challenges all certainties about cultural identity. Very loudly.

□ Something American is at the Nuffield Studio, Lancaster, on October 30: 01524 594 151.

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