Enjoyable, but too secret to review

Utopia/Distopia, presented by Splinters Theatre. Springbank Island, November 15-25. (7pm at Royal Canberra Hospital wharf).

WHEN the water transport finally arrived to take the opening-night audience to Springbank Island to look at *Utopia/Distopia*, there were a few mutterings in the ranks when it turned out not to be a nice comfy ferry, but a barge.

Any notion that Splinters were expecting us to restage the Normandy landings was rapidly dispelled when we arrived safely to be greeted by tour guides.

These conducted us safely through the whole show and then swore us to secrecy, which would appear to preclude reviewing.

However, Splinters are pretty well known for strong visual outdoor spectacle and it is fair to say that devotees of their work will not be disappointed.

This time the concentration is on image, and words are happily at a minimum.

There is water and fire and the biggest smoke machine I have ever seen. There is pattern in movement and lots of weird and wonderful sound.

The sets are a mixture of bamboo and steel and several old pianos. The performers sometimes seem to be less important than the sets.

I'm not altogether sure what it is all supposed to add up to, although there are certainly clues in the title which the aforementioned vow of silence makes it difficult to say much more about.

Sometimes I thought I was looking at Dr Who and at other times I thought it was more like a Norman Lindsay painting.

If that description appeals and your sense of adventure extends to travelling in a barge then you may well find much to enjoy in *Utopia/Distopia*. *Utopia/Distopia*. *Utopia/Distopia*. *Utopia/Distopia*.

Utopia/Distopia.
— ALANNA MACLEAN