



## THUS SPOKE...



**Review By Kathleen Smith NOW Rating: NNNN**

Toronto doesn't get to see works like Étienne Lepage and Frédéric Gravel's *Thus spoke...* often enough. Originally staged in French at Montreal's Festival TransAmériques and performed here in English, the work seamlessly integrates text and movement in a cynical yet cheeky discussion of individual agency within uncertain moral environments. We are reminded at the top of the show – and again in a coda – that we (artists and audience) are privileged. And it goes from there: performer Frédéric Lavallée muses about contract-killing Stephen Harper with crowd-sourced funding and why it wouldn't do any good; dancer Anne Thériault talks about all the "stuff" in the world – seven billion sweaters, seventy billion fingers and so on; and the ensemble urges the audience to google Stalin and pass the knowledge on. Oh, and we need to go beyond talking rebellion only with rebels, Lavallée suggests. It sounds like a lot of talk – and it is – but movement, dance and gesture remain key to the performance, enhancing, illustrating, expanding and grounding the discussion in the body. An exhilarating, smart and sexy show.