Melbourne Fringe Festival

Theatre: Beowulf

By Felix Nobis. The Dog Theatre, 42a Albert Street, Footscray, until October 8. $25.

Tim Richards Reviewer

It must be the year for reinventing classics; Hamlet's getting a makeover at La Mama, the Dog Theatre is giving the works to Orpheus, and here comes actor-poet Felix Nobis with a reworking of the medieval legend Beowulf.

No slouch at verse himself, Nobis has translated the 3000-plus lines of alliterative Old English, at which even a Fringe audience might bridle, into an action-packed thousand lines in the current version of our mother tongue.

Simply dressed in grey shirt and jeans, no shoes, he recites the saga as he moves around the stage with a finely judged physicality.

Simple props - a book, a candle - assist him in relating a tale of warriors, kings and monsters in an entirely gripping manner, switching between characters with a fine sense of timing.

It's old-fashioned story-telling - sweeping, melodramatic and compelling.