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Review: It's Hot, It's Not at Curve, Leicester 12 FEBRUARY

Splash splosh: Naomi Obeng reviews Reckless Sleepers' inviting, restless, weather-themed children's show.

It's Hot, It's Not at Curve, Leicester. Design, Reckless Sleepers.

Birdsong. Drip Drip. Splash. Splosh. Splash. The sound of green apples falling to the ground.

There's something about games and transitions in this show. The way that a movement or an impulse spreads, amplifies and evolves into something else. The sound of a buzzing fly becomes an imitation of buzzing and then a different sound entirely. In small and big ways these shifts and evolutions are everywhere.

It's Hot, It's Not, a creation of European theatre collective Reckless Sleepers, consists of three performers, their bodies, objects and sound. That's something I know for sure. The set is bright. A light wooden board with rows of small square doors faces us. The doors open to darkness. The performers climb onto and through them for reasons unknown. That's another thing I know for sure.

Rebecca seems permanently discovering the world for the first time. Mole is playful. Their costumes in earthy tones. They do whatever it is that they're doing with inviting conviction.

When we take our seats they're already moving, turning. Going through motions of eager waiting. Waving at us. Copying the nervous shuffle of a toddler walking to their seat. Later when I think they're mimicking each other, a child behind me says it's a dance. This isn't about being right. That's reassuring. Movement is up for interpretation. Drip Drip. Splash. Splosh. Splash. "H-h-h-hot".

Energy isn't expended by projecting out towards the audience. This is more like someone saying 'I'm going to go and do this now, join me if you like' and then going off to perform a magic trick. (Self-possessed, that's the word. Though this show isn't about words.)

The weather content is subtle. Gradual in the same way that the performers pick up each other's movements and sounds, establish, transmit and alter them. It's a while before I notice that we're moving into winter. The splash of Wellington boots makes me feel like Wednesday afternoons, when the total wipe-out rain would cover outdoor tiles in great blobs and I'd open the windows to let the smell of ozone in.

It's all quite evocative. Turning one thing into another. The winter is the most lovely. Trees are erected. The light dims. Chilling and soft-quiet as night falls.

Like looking up at a full moon in the middle of winter and trying to remember what the sun feels like on your skin. A final splosh into the waves (aka, off the raised stage) and they're gone. "No more little umbrellas mummy". No more little umbrellas.

But sunshine will come again.

It's Hot, It's Not was at the Curve, Leicester on 12th February.