

THE FAMILY STAGE

For PLAYful families

REVIEW: It's Hot, It's Not (Unicorn Theatre)

FEBRUARY 18, 2019

I'm struggling for words. Perhaps that's fitting for a review of show in which there was no spoken word at all. That of itself is not unusual for a show aimed at preschoolers. But every other example of this I've seen has had a very strong narrative that can be followed in the absence of dialogue.

I'm not entirely sure how to describe It's Hot, It's Not. It's not quite a dance show, although it is very physical. It's sort of visual comedy. But not quite slapstick. Maybe movement art. But that sounds a bit pretentious for toddlers.*

Whatever it was, it was enjoyably bonkers. Although judging by the noise in the theatre it didn't fully hold the attention of its target market. Admittedly it's pretty hard to keep a toddler quiet and still for almost an hour. Quaver is on the top end of the suggested age range at 5. Crotchet is comfortably outside it at 7. Both were enthralled. Mrs Mummy fell asleep (fittingly during a rendition of Hushaby Mountain).

The show was performed by a cast of three, acting out a spectrum of weather in what I have now decided is a style somewhere between mime and deliberate Dad dancing. It combined music and movement with a range of natural and synthetic props, creating quite a sensory experience. Particular highlights were apples and ping pong balls raining down onto the stage, and a man being hit in the face with giant inflatable beach ball! There were quieter moments too, with some clever lighting of the bottom of a metal bucket used to create the effect of moonlight.

All in all I think I liked it. The munchkins claim that they did too, although neither could explain why. Mrs Mummy just enjoyed her nap.

*Having now consulted the Unicorn Theatre website I am informed that:

" **Reckless Sleepers** is an extraordinary company who make work between visual art, dance and theatre. This surreal, funny and carefully crafted physical performance explores the weather in all its forms and takes delight in discovering the world anew and how we experience it differently, wherever we are. "

So there we are.