



## Hilarious Theatre with Fearless Players

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Joe Belanger

★★★★★

There are two kinds of playgrounds in this world.

There's the one everyone knows where children do the things children do — climb, run, jump, laugh, pretend and imagine.

Then there's the playground that James & Jamesy occupy.

The Vancouver duo of Aaron Malkin (James) and Alastair Knowles (Jamesy) have returned to London for their third visit to London Fringe, this time offering up the world premiere of what undoubtedly will become their newest hit, *James & Jamesy In The Dark*, on at the Grand Theatre's McManus Studio.

A near full house cheered when the show ended, many in the house stunned but still laughing, uncertain of what had just happened over the previous 60 minutes.

With *In The Dark*, Malkin and Knowles — in collaboration with David MacMurray Smith — have reached new heights of ridiculousness, silliness, absurdity, fun and courage.

Again they smashed through the fourth wall separating performer and audience, effortlessly convincing an audience of a hundred or so to get involved in their games.

Their's is a courageous show because if the audience doesn't submit, the show flops.

Few performers depend so heavily on audience participation where not even these two well-trained clowns know what's going to happen next, where improvisation is critical to their success.

To try and describe what happened is nearly impossible.

The show opens in dramatic fashion with racing beams of light (think *Star Trek* transporter), the voices of the two alternately yelling "Ready!" with increasing speed until at some point they are both on stage, each with a chair wearing lamps on their heads.

Then it begins and I'm not sure how it gets from there to the end, but it's a hilarious ride just listening to their banter and watching their physicality.



## James and Jamesy in the Dark

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ - CBC News

Jul 16, 2015

Iris Yudai

### **Company: James and Jamesy**

Are you still in the dark about why James & Jamesy are one of the most popular Fringe duos ever? Better snap up tickets now. Trust me, you'll see the light.

These guys are maestros at making theatre magic with the simplest of elements. It's like watching two big imaginative kids in a tent with flashlights, as they bring to life a whole world and invite you to step inside.

The eight-year-old girl in front of me giggled in delight for the whole hour. Yet the simple and repetitive dialogue packs layers of meaning. Think Abbott and Costello with a hint of Samuel Beckett.

They may be big kids, but James & Jamesy are exploring big questions about the role of the artist and the power of creation. And they're breaking down the fourth wall so you can be part of the fun. It's an unforgettable Fringe experience. Don't miss it.



## **Ready? Yes. It's another Incredible James & Jamesy Show.**

Theatre in London

June 6, 2015

Jay Menard



James & Jamesy are Fringe veterans who have built up a sizeable – and passionate – following thanks to their two “Tea” productions. This year, they’ve stripped their production down to the absolute basics: black, white, and light. And the result is something magical in James & Jamesy In the Dark.

It is a comedy, yes. But it can be better described as performance art.

Their ability to use voice and inflection can elicit laughter on its own. And their gifted use of facial expressions is a wonder to behold. But it is the refinement of their movement – the subtle grace and attention to detail – that truly takes their show to the next level.

To wit, the audience sits enraptured watching the simple act of placing a chair on the stage. The meticulous, almost hypnotic movements are compelling.

The use of guttural sounds and non-verbal expressions of amazement are reminiscent of La Linea; and the word play and banter hearken back to the classic “Who’s on First?” routine of Abbott and Costello. But far from being a dated representation, James & Jamesy’s performance is modern and entrancing.

It’s a hard show to describe effectively and adequately. It takes place, mostly, in the dark, illuminated exclusively by giant lights on their heads that resemble a 1970’s-era lampshade. And there’s some audience interaction. But that description almost infantilizes what is truly a mature, well-thought-out, and captivating production.

Don’t remain in the dark. James & Jamesy’s newest show demands to be seen and is a highlight of this year’s Fringe.