



Malkin's *Thunderfoot* an autobiographical fable

London Free Press, Joe Belanger

June 4, 2017

Children process information differently than adults.

Take Aaron Malkin, for instance, who was four years old when his mother died.

Those are the broad strokes that led to the creation of *Thunderfoot*, Malkin's first one-man show at London Fringe.

Malkin is a longtime Fringe Festival performer, the James or significantly taller half of James and Jamesy, with Alastair Knowles, who've won awards everywhere they've performed.

This is Malkin in a significant departure — what he describes as an “autobiographical fairy tale.” That's almost the perfect description of *Thunderfoot*. You could add poignant musical, drama, physical comedy or clowning, with a dash of stand-up and improv comedy, whether intended or not.

Malkin delivers an outstanding performance as four-year-old Mattias and several other characters, including his aged father and various folks such as the elderly lady who runs a bookstore in Småland.

The characters each speak to the massive footprints found in the road, huge trees knocked over and an earthquake, or “quaking” that draws the town together to figure out what's happening and what to do. There is a giant on the loose in town.

But it opens with Malkin first kibitzing with the audience, then under a single spotlight he says, “I was four when my father asked me to come sit on the living room

carpet. That's when he tells me ‘Your mother's dead.’”

And so the show begins as the little boy tries and fails for years to find out what happened to his mother, the adults in his world unable or unwilling to explain.

So, Mattias comes up with his own story. Malkin uses his significant clowning skills for much of the show, combined with his vocal sound effects augmented by recorded effects.

There are songs in the show with lyrics by Patrick Kearns and a sound design by Adrian Shephard-Gawinski that will rip your heart open, enhanced by Malkin's lovely, emotionally charged vocals.

Malkin's dramatic acting is inspiring, which is unusual when combined with audience participation and significant physical comedy. Even his mistakes, such as mixing up one of the character's accents, are fun.

Like James and Jamesy, Malkin incorporates his mistakes, audience reactions or comments into his scenes, a clear demonstration of his considerable talent at improvisation.

Thunderfoot will stay with you long after you've left the theatre, and will remind you of what it was like to be a child, the innocence, the unbounded imagination and the deep hurts that can take a lifetime to heal.

Thunderfoot is not just an “autobiographical fairy tale.” It's a cautionary tale.

Thunderfoot: Moving Art, in Every Sense of the Word

★★★★★

Theatre in London

June 1, 2017

Jay Menard



Thunderfoot, by Aaron Malkin, is more than just a mere performance — it is moving art, in every sense of the word.

Thunderfoot can best be described as living, breathing, art. Malkin, who is known to Fringe viewers as one half of the James and Jamesy duo (he's the taller, less hirsute, James), uses his body as a brush — painting imagery with his movements and leaving behind a tableau upon which his story is told.

It's truly beautiful to watch and the precision and delicacy of his movements leave nothing — and everything — to the imagination. The set is barren, but Malkin, through nothing more than making sounds and using his body to "draw" the environment. He creates images, using the power of our imagination, that are as real and persistent as any wood-and-paint set.

It's a play based on movement; and it's a play that moves you to the core.

The story is described as a one-man autobiographical fairy tale. It tackles the real-world death of Malkin's mother, who was addicted to drugs, through the creation of an imaginary world. It is a world where the main character, Mattias — a young boy whose mother left him in his youth — is moved to protect his village from a giant using a magic stone that reduces the size of one's danger by a factor of 100.

Malkin plays multiple roles, ranging from Mattias, to his father, to an elderly bookshop owner, to the mayor of the fictional town. Through only changes in his body language and voice, he embodies each and every

character, giving them form and vibrancy. And his ability to transition from one character to another, or one scene to the next, all within one fluid movement, is a wonder to behold.

It has all the Malkinisms you've come to expect: beautifully choreographed movement, delicate and subtle body control, and inspired interplay with the crowd and improvisational work. It has that underlying sweetness and joyful sense of play that all his work features. But it also has some unexpected surprises — such as Malkin's singing voice! The show features a couple of musical numbers that could be hokey in less-talented hands, but are poignant and emotive in this context.

Thunderfoot is a show that invites you to play, to imagine, and to explore. It's a play that engages your inner child, commands you to embrace a flight of fancy, and, in the end, it touches your soul. It's also a must-see on this Fringe circuit.

Winnipeg Free Press

Thunderfoot

★★★★★ (5/5 stars)

July 18, 2017

In this sparkling gem of a one-man show, Vancouver writer/performer Aaron Malkin weaves a wondrous fairy tale of giants — real and imagined — and a young boy trying to understand the disappearance of his mother.

Eschewing props and set, Malkin uses mime to build his world of childlike make-believe, and his physicality — and spot-on comedic timing — are jaw-dropping to behold. Whether he's creating a forest or a thunderstorm, or playing an old woman who works in a library, he's believable. In fact, he works so hard to transport us somewhere else that it can be jarring when he breaks the fourth wall to include the audience in his storytelling, but it's not enough to take away from the magic of show.

Thunderfoot is billed as a comedy, but don't be surprised if you get a bit misty. This is a heartfelt reminder of the power of imagination.

— Jen Zoratti, Winnipeg Free Press



James & Jamesy are such complete and utter fun

CBC Manitoba

June 17, 2013

Rosie Fernandez

★★★★★

An interactive show where most of the characters on stage are played by audience members, it's a surreal theatre adventure that somehow makes total sense.

Actors Aaron Malkin & Alastair Knowles become James and Jamesy, besties despite myriad differences. They have a standing date for tea on a weekly basis, and their tea times are the thread by which their crazy stories are told.

Jamesy is a lovable eccentric, childlike in his insistence on getting his own way and in his understanding of the world around him. James is his connection to the "real" world (and audience), and he treats Jamesy with tender concern and genuine admiration.

This play won Patron's Pick at the Toronto Fringe (similar to the Winnipeg Fringe's "Best of Fest"), to give you an indication of its wide appeal. And it's highly entertaining for all ages, largely because of how James and Jamesy break down the wall between performer and audience. But even if you're the wallflower type, they're so inviting (even treating you to a cup of tea) you may actually find yourself silently hoping that they bring you onstage.

Get tickets early for tea time with James and Jamesy.

EDMONTON JOURNAL

2 for Tea

5 stars out of 5 (★★★★★)

Every week, Jamesy has his friend James 'round for a cup of tea. This all sounds quite ordinary, but 2 for Tea is anything but.

Vancouver-based Brits Aaron Malkin and Alastair Knowles star in this extraordinary, eccentric production that blends physical theatre with comedy, improv and word play in a tale of male friendship steeped in misadventure. We first meet Jamesy, the agile, prancing love child of Austin Powers and Amadeus (minus the bad teeth and crazy laugh), flitting, shrieking and leprechaun-leaping about the stage as he prepares for company. To call him particular would be a gross understatement. Jamesy's world is one of ritual and order, of acrobatic, convoluted, ridiculous movement. He uses himself as a human measuring tape to set up his tea party, pokes out his bony little bum before placing it on his chair, snips off the tea streaming from the spout with his pretend scissors (two fingers). Knowles has created a hilarious, bizarre and quite wonderful character we won't soon forget.

His dear friend is James, a gentlemanly, kind-hearted chap who embraces the neuroses of his pal. Malkin, a strapping fellow with a shaved head who bears an uncanny resemblance to Matt Damon (I digress), grounds the show and performs amazing movement: caught in a rainstorm, running after an ambulance, drawing up a letter to the general on an invisible typewriter (to the tune of the satirical orchestral piece, *The Typewriter*). And while his character is at first deliberately outshone by his garrulous, deer-like, OCD counterpart, A & A (as J & J) conclude as a beautiful match.

Audience participation is integral to the storyline, but no need for alarm. The performers make it so enjoyable for their involuntary volunteers, you find yourself wishing you'd been called upon (this reviewer would have killed it as the Russian doctor).

2 for Tea is my favourite at the 2014 Edmonton Fringe so far and I suspect you'll love it, too, but, in the words of James, I wouldn't want to be presumptuous.

— Elizabeth Withey

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Winnipeg Free Press

2 for Tea

★★★★★

Winnipeg Free Press

July 8, 2016

Erin Lebar

Never has tea been more meticulously positioned, poured and sipped than in *2 for Tea*, performed by James and Jamesy out of Sussex, England.

This is the kind of comedy that induces full-out belly laughs all the way through — the combination of the duo's physical comedy, their interactions with the crowd and interactions with each other create a magical whirlwind where anything seems plausible. One minute, they're serving tea to soldiers on the front lines, the next, a simple tea party has turned into a crazy family photo session that ends with a fatal (for some) ambulance ride.

Fair warning, there is a lot of audience participation (kudos to the four audience members at Wednesday's 8:15 p.m. show for outstanding contributions), but it only adds to the hilarity and charm of this wonderful show.

— Erin Lebar, Winnipeg Free Press

2 for Tea: A Masterpiece of Refined Chaos

★★★★★

Theatre in London

June 2, 2016

Jay Menard



It is hard to classify James & Jamesy's *2 for Tea*. It is at once a physical comedy and a touching story of friendship and love. It's at the same time a paean to precision and an exercise in controlled chaos. It is both an homage to the great comedy duos of the past whilst remaining a contemporary delight that keeps getting better.

The easiest way to classify *2 for Tea* is to say that it's a must-see production on this year's Fringe circuit.

2 for Tea tells the story of straight man James (and straight man is a relative term because James, played by Aaron Malkin, is an excellent physical comedian in his own right and he gets to show off his chops throughout the production) and Jamesy (played by Alastair Knowles), who is the embodiment of the love child of Mick Jagger and Ed Grimley – if that child studied at the Ministry of Silly Walks.

The story revolves around a couple of tea parties, but the story itself is ancillary to the experience.

2 for Tea is a masterpiece of physical comedy. It's one that has been refined and showcases the duo's talents to great effect. Despite being theatrical and flamboyant, the brilliance of *2 for Tea* comes in its execution.

Every movement, even the most dramatic gestures, are masterpieces of precision. Every note, every word, and every subtle hand movement, eyebrow raise, and even the subtle hip thrusts tell a story. There may be exaggerated gestures, but there are no wasted movements.

This show is a reprise of one the duo ran in London four years ago. And it shows that they've worked on it. This show is not for note perfection. It is perfect even in its moments of imperfection as both performers have honed their improvisational skills.

They invite the audience to participate throughout. In fact, that's integral to the success of the production. Yet it never feels forced. And it never suffers for the inclusion of non-professionals.

2 for Tea is a show that kicked off the Fringe festivities at The Palace Theatre and it's one that's going to prove to be a hard act for anyone to follow.



Torontoist top picks: High Tea

Aeman Ansari, Torontoist

July 7, 2015



In *High Tea*, multi-award-winners James and Jamesy use physical humour and audience participation to transform the theatre's performance space into whatever they choose. While the play appears, on the surface, to be about a couple that spills tea all over the world, it's really an ode to the idea that anything is possible. The performers' irresistible hijinks leave the audience wanting more complimentary tea, and more of James and Jamesy.

– Aeman Ansari, *Torontoist*

High Tea review

Christopher Hoile, Stage Door Toronto

July 2, 2015



Jamesy: “Thank you all for playing with us!”

Anyone who saw James (Aaron Malkin) and Jamesy (Alastair Knowles) in *2 for Tea*, should rush to see their follow-up to that show – *High Tea*. The new show expands their comedic celebration of the imagination and takes it to the nth degree. If William Blake wrote of the joy “To see a World in a Grain of Sand,” James and Jamesy act out the wonder of discovering an ocean and everything in it inside a teapot. *High Tea* is about the primal pleasure of playing in every sense of the word. I can’t think of a show that will make you more profoundly happy than this.

One of the joys of the show is how it seems to be completely improvised. In fact, director David MacMurray Smith has carefully orchestrated the events of the action to form a gradual but unstoppable crescendo. You will have no idea from the simple way the play begins to what delirious heights James and Jamesy will take you in the course of only one hour.

The first thing to appear from behind the curtain is, suitably enough, a teapot. Jamesy carries on in an undulating fashion as if it were sailing to its resting spot on the table. In a recap of *2 for Tea*, Jamesy has invited James over for one of their weekly teas. James arrives at the invisible door to Jamesy’s place and phones to say he is there. The lid of the teapot rattles and Jamesy answers it, the teapot instantly transforming into a telephone with the lid as the mouthpiece.

After much confusion about who is where when, James finally sits down for tea and begins to fill the audience in on the background story. Jamesy, however, objects, since he can’t see who James is talking to. To have two characters on stage – one who believes there is a fourth wall, and one who does not – is a wonderfully paradoxical situation that sets in motion the show’s theme of the role of imagination in theatre. James, the realist with the shaved head, eventually proves that we the audience are out there, but not before Jamesy, the fantasist with the exuberant hair, proves that a wall or door can exist wherever he says there is one. What we see enacted is how the restrained James, as a representative of the audience,

comes to see how the flamboyant Jamesy’s world works and how James comes to enjoy the adventure that Jamesy’s world offers.

When the two settle down to having tea, something terrible happens. The (invisible) tea pouring out of the teapot first fills up Jamesy’s room behind the fourth wall, plunging both undersea (or, more correctly, undertea), and then bursts through the wall to engulf the entire audience. The audience is now fully part of the world of imagination and with surprising enthusiasm follows its rules.

I don’t want to give away the series of increasing magical effects that occur from this point on except to say that James and Jamesy do nothing less than bring about a completely different way of thinking in the audience. It was amazing to witness how easily people could transform themselves into sea creatures simply by James or Jamesy telling them that is what they were. It was beyond amazing to see the entire audience happily become the inhabitants of a second Noah’s ark floating on this new flood. Following their example and encouragement, the theatre of people transformed into a playhouse of children who just happen to be in adult form. The solution to this second flood is unbelievably hilarious and involves, among other personages chosen from the audience, the Captain of the ark, his First Mate, the Queen and, well why not, even God.

I remember when playing with my brother and sister that our ordinary back yard could become a jungle in Africa, a plain in the West, another planet or a forest full of spies just by our deciding what it was. As adults we praise the imagination that children have in playing and creating as if we no longer have it. Just an hour at *High Tea* proves we have not lost that imagination. We simply haven’t been given the space, encouragement or freedom to exercise it. That space, that encouragement and that freedom are exactly what James and Jamesy give us. The immense pleasure we feel comes from realizing that a power we thought was lost has only been dormant. James and Jamesy’s *High Tea* awakens us.

– Christopher Hoile, *Stage Door Toronto*



High hilarity in High Tea

London Free Press

June 6, 2014

Joe Belanger

★★★★★

Think of a child's imagination on steroids. Now, blend in a healthy dose of ridiculous, a little silly, lots of charm, more than a dash of daring and you've got James and Jamesy's new London Fringe show, *High Tea*, on at London Convention Centre.

The Vancouver duo whose show, *2 for Tea*, took home the Patrons' Pick at the 2013 London Fringe, have returned with a sure-fire Fringe circuit hit, an extraordinarily funny and courageous show that depends heavily on audience participation to succeed. Succeed it does and everyone should be thankful *High Tea* is being staged at the Fringe's largest venue, since it's questionable whether the London Convention Centre's 320 seats will be enough to meet demand.

This show is outrageously funny, magnificently written, combined with brilliant performances by Aaron Malkin (as James Brown) and Alastair Knowles (as Jamesy Evans). It is a beautifully choreographed show that engages the audience for the full 60 minutes, never lagging.

Of course, the show begins with James arriving at Jamesy's flat for their weekly tea party. It quickly devolves from a tea party into an epic catastrophe when the fourth wall separating actors from the audience explodes and floods the theatre with laughs and gags that never allow the audience to get

comfortable or even anticipate what's coming next.

Without trying to spoil the fun, let's just say the show plays off Noah's Ark and the movie *Titanic*. For cripes' sake, there's even sexual tension between these two characters.

Knowles' Jamesy, dressed in riding pants and tight, waist length woman's jacket, delivers his trademark exacting and exaggerated movements, for instance always placing his foot on the table to pour tea. Plainly stated, Jamesy is an eccentric idiot with an overactive imagination, obsessive compulsive disorder and a competing attention deficit disorder. James, a very large man in dress shirt, jacket, pants and bowler hat, is the perfect antidote to Jamesy's imagination and whimsical ways, caring and protective, loyal and subdued 'floating' along with whatever spills out of Jamesy's imagination.

That more than 250 people in the theatre unanimously opted to participate with little or no encouragement and gave a roaring standing ovation, speaks to the outstanding performances of these two men. There are great shows at every Fringe festival, some by surprise. This is one those surprises, one of those gems that comes around far too infrequently.

My advice is buy a ticket as soon as possible.

VUE WEEKLY

James & Jamesy in High Tea

Vue Weekly

August 14, 2016

Ryan Bromsgrove



An absurdly hilarious physical comedy, James & Jamesy in High Tea sees James arrive at a tea party with his unhinged friend Jamesy. In short order, the two find themselves drowning the world in tea. It may feel a little slow starting, but the pacing speeds up, with each sequence intensifying the riotous comedy, building ever more ridiculous situations with the very willing assistance of the audience. It's incredible to watch these two spin such a silly premise into a whirlpool of laughter, teapots, and floating chairs. See this. See this if you have even a scrap of a sense of humour in you

James & Jamesy In the Dark

★★★★★

Stage Door, Toronto

July 10, 2017

Christopher Hoile

Jamesy: "Are you there?"

Favourite Fringe performers James and Jamesy take a daring and radical new direction in their latest show *In the Dark*. Gone are the tweeds, Jamesy's cozy parlour and even the tea set. Instead, the two take us into the darker, minimalist world of an empty unlit stage. The duo are no longer two ordinary but imaginative British chaps – one talkative, one taciturn – but rather, as it seems, two humanoid aliens from another world. Yet, fans of the duo's previous shows will find that the James and Jamesy they love are still there. The new, abstract setting has merely allowed them to explore the very essence of what lay behind such shows as *2 for Tea* seen in Toronto in 2013 and *High Tea* seen here in 2015.

2 for Tea focused on how two people of apparently opposite personalities come to be friends and come to be aware they are on a stage being watched. The line between performer and audience became blurred when the two invited audience members on stage to play costumed roles. *High Tea* focused on the contrast between James, who breaks the fourth wall from the start and Jamesy, who doesn't understand what James is doing. Once Jamesy comes to understand the world James lives in, the world of the theatre, the two enter the audience and orchestrate the entire audience's participation in their story from its seats.

Both plays dealt with differences of perception between James and Jamesy and the encouragement of play (or activity for the sake of enjoyment) in the audience. The same is true in *In the Dark*, but the piece proceeds through much more rigorous stages in detailing the nature of perception and of play.

The very costumes the two wear reinforce the show's emphasis on perception. Both wear identical grey suits and identical helmets. The helmets look rather like the huge helmets the first undersea divers used to wear with the significant difference that built into the top of helmet is a large old-fashioned lampshade positioned directly forwards, its open bottom covered by a translucent disc to diffuse the light. The costume makes the two look like retro humanoid versions of Pixar's Luxo lamps. We understand from their gestures that all either can see is what the head-lamp illuminates.

In the Dark begins with a loud noise when a cone of light shines down from somewhere high above the stage. In the cone one of the duo appears with a chair. He places it precisely on the stage, gets into position behind the chair, calls out "Ready", the cone light shines down and the character seems to be drawn upwards by the light. This action occurs several times in succession with James (Aaron Malkin) and Jamesy (Alastair Knowles) alternating in the duty of the chair placer or chair remover. For what seems a long time, "Ready" is the only word we hear from either of them. Then comes a change. One calls out "Ready" and no cone of light appears. Then the same happens to the other leaving the two stranded on stage together for the first time.

Apparently, neither has known of the other's existence since their first reactions on seeing each other are fright and shock. As in *2 for Tea*, we see how two beings first come to know each other and then come to know how to play together. Here, however, the two are not of opposite temperaments, but rather apparently exactly the same. That means that when one

tries to understand what the other looks like and how he reacts, he also, gradually, comes to understand what he himself looks like and how he reacts. Interaction with an "Other" thus increases knowledge of oneself.

This point becomes especially clear when one says he can see the back of the other. Without mirrors one can't see one's own back, so we understand that each one of the two actually needs the other to have a fuller understanding of what he is.

When the two turn off their head-lamps as if with a chain pull and are fully in the dark, they experience the panicked feeling that the other has disappeared. The question both ask, "Are you there?" is no longer a trivial question but an existential one. The minimalist dialogue with its frequent repetitions has already made the play seem much like a sci-fi version of a play by Samuel Beckett.

Now with the question whether things and beings exist when they cannot be seen, James and Jamesy enter into one of Beckett's favourite subjects – "esse est percipi" ("to be is to be perceived"). This is the central tenet of the philosophy of the Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753) and Beckett used it as the motto for his one film simply called *Film* from 1965. One of the main preoccupations of characters in Beckett's plays is whether they are seen. In *Waiting for Godot* (1953), Vladimir and Estragon insist that the messenger boy from the absent Godot tell his master that he has *seen* them so that Godot will at least know that they exist. In later plays Beckett's characters depend on the sound of a voice, often their own, to give them proof that they exist. In *In the Dark* James and Jamesy don't reach that final stage of aloneness. They come to learn that hearing the voice of the other is proof enough that he is still there.

Once the two have established that each is just like the other and have become used to their

mutual dependence, the show takes the same turn that it does in *High Tea*. The two aliens suddenly become aware that across the gulf separating the stage from the audience's seats there are other people and the people are watching them. The greatest excitement of the show is when the two enter the audience and Jamesy examines us to see what we're like and if we know how to play the game of the walking finger-man that both he and James play.

After that excursion, they bring that knowledge back to the stage with them and something magical happens. This part of the show is so surprising I do not wish to give it away. Let me just say that through an inexplicable combination of eye-contact and gesture, the duo manages to elicit and control the audience's audible reactions. People often speak of "the magic of the theatre", but this is truly magical. How we have established such a bond with them and they with us is unknown but somehow the two have taught us a game and we have learned to play it to our own infinite amusement and wonder.

Teaching the audience to play again is part of *In the Dark* as it has been in James and Jamesy's previous shows. But *In the Dark* looks more deeply at the subject. For theatre to work it must be observed. For people to know more fully about themselves they need other people. The theatrical experience is based on our perception of others on stage while we learn more about ourselves by observing these others. In *In the Dark* James and Jamesy demonstrate step by step why both play and plays are necessary both for enjoyment of life and for self-knowledge. *In the Dark* is still as comic as the duo's previous plays. But this is comedy at its profoundest and most essential. It may be a play on words but it is also true – *In the Dark* is a play that enlightens. Anyone interested in the ultimate nature of theatre must see it.



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.



Hilarious Theatre with Fearless Players

London Free Press

June 5, 2015

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.



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 harken 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.