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The inspiring brilliance of 'Carson and Taylor Promise to Do a Bunch of Flips'

The comedians Carson Pinch and Taylor Davis fulfilled a rash, reckless promise ten times over and delivered an ecstatic celebration of the art of physical comedy

Calum MarshMar 06, 2020 • March 6, 2020 • 2 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



"Carson & Taylor Promise to Do a Bunch of Flips," delivers what it advertised, writes Calum Marsh. PHOTO BY HANDOUT

With their new show "Carson & Taylor Promise to Do a Bunch of Flips," which they premiered Thursday night at the Theatre Centre in Toronto as part of the opening night of Toronto Sketchfest, the comedians Carson Pinch and Taylor Davis fulfilled a rash, reckless promise ten times over. The show's title is extremely literal. Earlier this year, the duo announced their intention to perform a show comprised of flips — an acrobatic stunt that neither was actually capable of executing. They spent months training and learning gymnastics, and as the day of the show rapidly approached, they took to social media to lament their lack of progress, warning that they were "not even close." So it was in an atmosphere of exquisite tension that they hit the stage last night. You needed to see if they would pull it off.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

What they pulled off was even more remarkable: an ecstatic celebration of the art of physical comedy.



“Carson & Taylor Promise to Do a Bunch of Flips” is, among other things, an homage to classic slapstick and the antics of silent comedians such as Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd, whose virtuoso stuntwork often pushed the limits of the human body. Over the course of perhaps a dozen sketches, Pinch and Davis roll, spin, twirl, and crash through a cascade of pratfalls, braving grievous bodily harm with giddy bravado. They climb teetering ladders and wrestle on the ground; they come close enough to injury that at one point someone had to check to see that they were okay. This is a show that starts with Davis hurling Pinch through a table — and it only gets more absurd from there.

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Davis and Pinch have built the show around the flip, but not exactly in the ways you might expect. They have devised many clever visual puns and canny double entendres — witness for instance how they’ve found flipping through a book, or, in one of their best gags, flipping an electric guitar around their body. But they also perform several impressive variations on actual, honest-to-goodness flips, beginning with the violent table-destroying flip that kicks off the evening. I can hardly overstate the enthusiasm with which the audience responded to that first flip, which is sudden and shocking. With a title like this, it’s impossible not to applaud the accomplishment.

The title and the concept bring a certain pressure to the act of flipping, in part because we are aware of the effort that went into the performance, and in part because we didn’t quite know, going into it, whether they’d actually be doing any real flips at all. Davis and Pinch have turned this simple physical deed to a radical and all-consuming ambition, and watching them see that ambition through live on stage, more than simply amusing, is oddly touching. It’s an absurdly low-stakes quest, but that simplicity makes it almost beautiful. Davis and Pinch understand the immense pleasure of watching someone contort themselves physically, and they have emphasized the challenge of the exercise in just the right way. They show delivers what it advertised. They do indeed do a bunch of flips.

'Carson & Taylor Promise to Do a Bunch of Flips' plays Saturday, March 7th at 9pm at the BMO Incubator in Toronto



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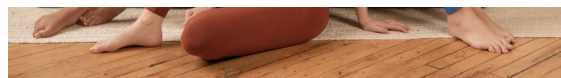
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