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The ultimate Edinburgh Festival guide

CONTROLLED FALLING PROJECT

Posted by Hannah Thomas, Sun 16 Aug 2009



Much like porn films, acrobatic shows are famed for their rudimentary-at-best plots. Too often the narrative seems an afterthought, poorly employed to connect a series of physical feats. And though handstands, backflips and balancing tricks are impressive, the novelty soon wears off if the premise is ludicrous and the characters staid. Fortunately quirky troupe This Side Up Acrobatics have overcome that challenge, producing an energy-packed creative experiment that fare surpasses the Festival's standard circus fare.

An eerie laboratory forms the backdrop for the show, a fantastical environment scattered with scientific apparatus from which ominous sounds emerge. In this bleak terrain an eccentric scientist puppeteers his human guinea pigs into performing increasingly dangerous feats to further his research. Ancient science meets circus in a series of high-octane experiments designed to push the human body to its very limits. Bodies hurtle through the air with little regard for gravity, men clamber up poles like frantic monkeys, and acrobats effortlessly leap several feet into the air.

The cast interact exclusively through mime, employing Chaplain-esque movements and exaggerated gestures that fuel the comic characterisation. Though one small glitch results in a temporary loss of composure, the acrobats remain in character for the rest of the show and their humorous exchanges are a real highlight.

A pumping soundtrack perfectly underscores the action, reflecting the varied pace of the acrobats' movement, and additional drumming from the mad scientist himself effectively builds tension at key points throughout the show.

A heady concoction of fantasy and acrobatics, Controlled Falling Project certainly sustains the wow factor from beginning to end.



Controlled Falling Project

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