

## 2 for Tea: A Masterpiece of Refined Chaos

★★★★★

Theatre in London

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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.