

Thunderfoot: Moving Art, in Every Sense of the Word

★★★★★

Theatre in London

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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.