

Swamp Juice: No Shadow Of A Doubt (*****)

Swamp Juice. A Shadow Puppet Menagerie with a 3D FINALE.
Underbelly, Cowgate. All ages.

Sell your souls to Satan, pawn the Pekinese, put your kidneys up on ebay but just find money enough to secure tickets for an unforgettable Fringe show family phantasmagoria. Yes, the google-eyed, dickie-bowed Canadian Professor of Anarchy, Jeff Achtem (Bunk Puppets & Scamp Theatre), is back in town with 'Swamp Juice' along with his washing-line imaginarium of shadow puppetry and an ecstasy of incredible 3D applied eccentricities. This solo menagerie of 'found-objects' characterisation and props (ie junk) are brought to delightful animation with wit and panache together with enough grunts, burps, pukes and a farting mouse to delight the inner-child in us all. The frantic airborne chase by the gobbling goblin after the ubiquitous 'Birdy-Birdy' in stunning front-lit 3D nonsense-surround is a howling delight whilst the doubtful intention of the over-affectionate Portugese Man-of-War jellyfish has the grown-ups squirming behind the children.

Never sure whether his diversions and spontaneous shifts of consciouness are part of the act or just moments of his synapse snapping chaos exploding with fertive fertility, his surreal monologue vocalisations are ever bemusing. Whilst props and characters are of ludicrous simplicity Achtem's ability to animate facial expressions, in particular the eyes, has the audience empathising with the creatures and booing the baddy. This is one unmissable show with the added bonus of a super-screen one day double performance of last year's award-winning 'Sticks, Stone, Broken Bones', August 15th, Underbelly Pasture.