

Edinburgh International Festival REVIEW Leaving Planet Earth **



Leaving Planet Earth is a small jump for no one in particular and a giant disappointment for the rest of us.

I am excited to be leaving planet Earth. I am an Apollo and moon shot junkie. I love science fiction. I am really looking forward to “Leaving Planet Earth” at the Edinburgh International Festival. Check-in for your journey begins at the EICC. You are given a “personal quantifier”. It glows and pulses as you strap it to your hand. I am now dangerously excited. We board our transport to the “jump” which will take us to New Earth.

Fire, flood, war and the wrath of God has made earth a really bad place. We jump to our new location under the guidance of our transition team guide. We are under the guidance of the leader Vela through the acclimatisation process.

It is here that a brilliant concept, spectacular venue, lighting, effects and music is suddenly let down by a rambling story delivered by an over acting cast. John our old earth historian is not even close to identifying with his audience, Vela our great leader is unbelievable as a former crisis manager or leader of a new utopia. The only redeeming character in a sea of mediocrity is Hal, a data miner. Hal engages with us. He mines the data to help us stay well. He is a real person and we like him. He is human and funny. His fellow cast members are made to look even more synthetic after our encounter with Hal played by Chris Nayak.

The directors are Catrin Evans and Lewis Hetherington. I was

left wondering if they too had waded through this three hours of amateur night. Come on guys, you have a great concept and a great venue – sharpen the story, direct these actors, and make us believe – we are willing believers. Shorten the show by about 60 minutes and you will be getting closer to something special.

No one boarding the bus on the return journey had that crackling of energy so often associated with live theatre, people were disappointed and tired. One lady suggested it rated 3 stars for ambition, but for me 2 stars is a bit of a stretch.

Jonathan Mills announced at the launch of the Festival Programme that there would be many uses of technology this year. But this production failed to grasp technology as it should have, in much the same way as the rather disappointing NVA's Speed of Light last year.

[Leaving Planet Earth](#) is performed by Grid Iron theatre company. The journey to New Earth begins at 8.00pm at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC). Buses will then transport travellers to New Earth (and back).



Submitted by [Mart McAdam](#)