

# Edinburgh International Festival REVIEW – Sigur Ros

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☒ Sigur Ros met with huge applause and standing ovation on Tuesday night, as they took to the stage of The Edinburgh Playhouse for the last of their two shows. However, the set design took the limelight on the evening, somewhat smothering the allure of Jonsi's vocals, with the strobing and visuals, which some might argue would hinder accessibility and inclusivity to the show.

Performing at a sold out gig, the band, which seemed stripped of their epic proportions to two guitars (one of which played like a viola or double bass by the singer), drums, keyboard and vocals, were applauded and wolf-whistled, as they played tracks such as *Glósóli* and *Sæglópur*.

Notably they refrained from playing their two most noted, *Svefn-g-englar* and *Hoppipolla*, perhaps due to feeling of overplaying and keeping things fresh. Epic and ethereal, electrifying and elemental, the Icelandic lads perform their songs of transcendental beauty, in such a fashion that evokes this battle between industry and nature, between technology and the core roots of the earth from which we grew.

Whether this be through their avant-garde modes of performing or the visuals, which at times panned beautiful rural landscapes from a birds-eye perspective and at others a more industrial *Total Recall* vibe, there is a sense of war and frustration, which ended in a highly offensive play on our senses.

Evocative, emotional and with notes that truly hit the core of our being, Jonsi's musical integrity is held, infallible, with the two other performers. As well as the band, the set design

should perhaps have been stripped down a tad, including removing those cages, which made them look a bit detached from the audience from the offset.

However, the visuals and set design were at times breathtaking and cannot be entirely criticised; the images of the more celestial had us in awe, as we had settled into our brief planetarium playhouse.

Musically, they did hit all levels of predictability, layering and building, building and layering and heightening, until their sound resonated within the venue, vibrations well felt. Alongside the light – strobing this was not a gig for the more sensitive.

However, for the clear Sigur Ros fans, who have a precise level of expectation, they did not leave the Playhouse disappointed. The Edinburgh Playhouse with that level of set design and lighting, however, should also not leave disappointed if they don't feel that they have widened their audience.