

Review:... .And This Is My Friend Mr Laurel ****



**...And This Is My Friend Mr Laurel
Pleasance Upstairs 1130 am**

THERE is a magic when an actor is able to transform his face into the character he plays.

When Jeffrey Holland's Stan Laurel speaks to an invisible Oliver "Babe" Hardy on his sickbed, he is really Cumbrian lad, Stanley Jefferson but when the play cuts away to short scenes, the veteran actor's whole visage is that of the famous black and white movie star that we love and adore.

Jeffrey Holland is also able to deliver the frankly surreal lines that Laurel delivered. They are such good lines that they could be ruined in the wrong hands. One of this reviewer's favourites is "A horse may be drawn to water but a pencil must be led" Holland delivers it beautifully.

This is a poignant play with Laurel realising that they will never perform again and for every reflection on triumphs, it is regrets and frustrations that cloud his thoughts.

It is a touching, thoughtful performance by a comedian who clearly has great respect for the subject.

The script also manages to include little enlightening

biographical references such as the derivation of Hardy's nickname "Babe".

The 1130am makes this show a perfect early kick off if you are having a marathon Fringe day. Light but layered, yes poignant but you still left the auditorium with a smile on your face.

And you know, it still is a long distance from Phoenix Arizona!