

Umbilical Brothers strike a chord with Fringe audiences

★★★★

The Umbilical Brothers: The Distraction is a misnomer for in this hour-long madcap maelstrom there is little chance of being distracted from what is going on stage and screen as David Collins and Shane Dundas (the bald one) deliver a clever, funny and energetic performance.

The first 10 minutes was blighted by technical difficulties, or so the duo claimed, but it was hard to tell if that was the case, and it didn't lessen the entertainment or enjoyment of the opening scenes as the pair jumped between various cameras and green screens to deliver a unique Fringe show.

Props, puppetry and scripted and off-the-cuff commentary melded with smartly produced graphics and digital wizardry, orchestrated by visual effects maestro Doug Bayne, and the Umbies as they are called, were fleet-of-foot as they nipped here and there and jumped and down, in and out, to keep the antics fast and furious.



The Umbilical Brothers – Dave Collins (left) and Shane Dundas – on at Assembly Roxy

Audience participation – in a way unlike the norm – kept the crowd amused and engaged and was not for the light-headed and

inserts like Baby Games appealed to those of us with a darker and more immature sense of humour.

The Distraction won Best Comedy at the Adelaide Fringe and enjoyed sell-out runs at the Sydney Opera House and in The Netherlands, and its easy to see why. There were quite a few kids in the crowd, who no doubt understood the nuance and subtleties of the graphic-led going-ons better than this reviewer, and that may be connected to their Emmy winning TV series The Upside Down Show created with Sesame Workshop.

It's the first time in almost a decade that The Umbies have toured Edinburgh and it's worth pulling yourself away from your computer screen or shutting down your laptop to spend an hour in the company of two of Australia's most creative, if slightly chaotic, comedy acts.

The Umbilical Brothers: The Distraction is at Assembly Roxy, 6.10p daily until 28 August except 9/14/21 August.

Tickets £15 and £16, concessions £14 and £15. To book tickets visit www.assemblyfestival.com

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