

2013

HECKLER

March 2013

This is circus stripped bare.

A Simple Space by Adelaide collective Gravity and Other Myths turns the showy bells and whistles circus genre completely on its head. Short and sharp, with plain costumes, no set decorations, speeches or explanations, and hardly any props or even sound (aside from the panting of the performers), A Simple Space really does live up to its name.

The stunts performed are breathtaking, but it's the creativity behind it all that really makes this show one of the highlights of this year's Fringe. From games of don't touch the floor to the boys stacking themselves on top of each other to create a human high bar for the impressive Jascha Boyce to swing about on, it's easy to imagine these performers were the kind of children that played with the packaging instead of their toys at Christmas.

They use competition to great effect too – you won't forget their skipping rope version of strip poker in a hurry. Truly wonderful stuff.

<http://www.heckler.com.au/2013/03/16/review-a-simple-space/>

KRYZTOFF RAW

BY MIRIAM KEANE

March 2013

★★★★★

Gravity & Other Myths are a local group of alumni from Cirkidz who show audiences just what the human body is capable of. Accompanied by Elliot Zoerner on drums, the five featured performers (Lachlan Binns, Jascha Boyce, Jacob Randell, Martin Schreiber and Triton Tunis-Mitchell) throw themselves into each segment of the show with monumental energy and enthusiasm. What's more, they look like they're having a ball the whole time.

These guys aren't just acrobats or gymnasts; they have a great stage presence and inject their show with a cheeky humour. In between impressive tumbles and unbelievable shows of strength, they have group challenges, reminiscent of school-yard games, at the end of which one member reigns triumphant as "best in show" or acknowledges their loss with a fun penalty. The majority of feats are carried off without a hitch, while the occasional slip up reminds you of the potential dangers of what you're viewing and adds to the adrenaline rush.

It's awe-inspiringly impressive to watch people who are so in control of their body. While other shows may rely on costumes, sets and tricks to create an atmosphere, the simplicity of the stage space on which this troupe works allows the talent of the performers to shine. I don't know how many expletives escaped my mouth during the show but it would have easily been in double figures and might have gone higher had I not been rendered literally speechless the rest of the time.

<http://www.kryztoff.com/RAW/?p=7105>

THE ADVERTISER

BY SHERADYN HOLDERHEAD

15th March 2013

★★★★★

Adelaide Fringe 2013 Stripped back and raw, the latest offering from Adelaide's Gravity & Other Myths is an awe-inspiring display of strength, skill and creativity.

The audience is exposed to a behind-the-scenes look at a group of young performers pushing themselves to the limit, revealing their sweat, discussion and failures.

The acrobatics are so tremendous and without safety devices that at times you are left holding your breath waiting for disaster, which luckily does not eventuate.

Each part of the performance holds your attention in a different way, from the humour of the opening sequence where the performers put their own twist on strip poker (just add a skipping rope), to a moving sequence where three performers contort together only allowing one to touch the ground.

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/entertainment/a-simple-space/story-fnhcc8pe-1226597969015>

THE GUARDIAN

BY ALEX NEEDHAM

17th March 2013

Alex Needham reporting for duty after a blazing hot afternoon and evening exploring Adelaide's fringe. With Adelaide arts journalist Jane Howard as my guide, I saw three shows in five hours - and two of them were brilliant.

The first was a circus show called A Simple Space by Gravity and Other Myths at the Birdcage, an old cinema near Adelaide's East Terrace. My expectations weren't high - like Jarvis Cocker, I don't approve of things like tumbling - but the five performers, four men and one woman, were amazing. With nothing but a mat and a live drummer, they created a riveting show of the most incredible physical feats. You haven't lived until you've seen two blokes stand on each other's shoulders then suspend a woman, Jascha Boyce, on a pole between them - who then performs gymnastics about 12 ft in the air. Or a backflip competition. Alas about five minutes before the end, in a routine in which Boyce was flung around the room, one of the men dropped her, which made the rest of the show a rather heart-in-mouth affair. But it was a total triumph. You can see Gravity and Other Myths doing their thing here.

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2013/mar/08/adelaide-festival-blog-week-two1>

TVBOMB

BY JULIE DAWSON

1st August 2013

★ ★ ★ ★

There are points in A Simple Space where the only audible noise over the live music is the sound of the performers gasping for breath after some herculean exertion. Audience members (especially those in the front row) may find themselves doing the same thing when this show draws to a close. For both punters and artists, this performance is literally breathtaking, and it's made all the more impressive by the intimate scale, where acrobats tower above the audience and tumble at their feet.

New and exciting things are happening in the world of circus, and Gravity and Other Myths would appear to be at the forefront of this movement. Like last year's success story Casus, these are daredevil feats with the confetti and sequins stripped away leaving nothing in their place but sheer talent and truly astonishing skill.

<http://www.tvbomb.co.uk/2013/08/a-simple-space/>

BROADWAY BABY

BY LENE KORSEBERG

31st July 2013

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Simply the Best

It is not often you leave a performance lost for words. However, any viewer leaving the dimly lit and beautifully simplistic set of A Simple Space cannot help but leave impressed.

Just to clarify, there is nothing simple about what the six performers are doing on stage. From the innovative music to the wonderful acrobatics, perfection can be detected in all elements of the performance. The opening sequence features a jumping rope version of strip poker, the first of many sorts of competitions between the dancers. Special mention should be made of a particularly funny challenge in which the audience is invited to throw small rubber balls at the dancers whilst the latter are standing on their hands. The one who manages to stand the longest, wins. Not surprisingly, all of them managed to hold themselves up longer than most of us could dream of.

Between the humorous competitions the audience is treated to mind blowing dance and acrobatics. The stage isn't big and yet the performers carry out their task with skill and precision, making even the most demanding and physically challenging movements seem ridiculously easy. They clearly enjoy themselves thoroughly, constantly surprising the audience with ever more spectacular and enjoyable stunts. In the act's grand finale the only female dancer is essentially thrown around the stage by the rest, leaving an already impressed audience silent with awe and admiration.

A Simple Space is bound to blow you away and the young performers who have come all the way from Australia deserve all the praise they can get. This truly is a wonderful production. Simple, perhaps, but all the more spectacular for it.

<http://www.broadwaybaby.com/listing.php?id=21709>

THE NEW CURRENT

BY NIGER ASIJE

3 August 2013

★★★★★

Edinburgh Fringe has the power and magic to leave you sat in a stunned silence. One of the benefits of being a reviewer is that you're likely going to see a hell of a lot of shows and you can never be sure if they are going to be as good as they sound. My rule has always been, go to the show blind, have as little an idea about what you're about to see as possible that way you can never be disappointed.

Multi Award winning Australian company Gravity & Other Myths was off to an iffy start due to being in one of the Gilded Balloon's bigger venues and during preview week. But after walking into the theatre they had changed the space and created a central flat stage at seat level with four arching lights at each point of the mat.

As the company come to the stage the lights go down and they adjust the four lamps that or fixed at each corner of the stage. Over the next hour they showcase some amazing physical techniques that left the audience astounded.

The company has fun and though few words are shared between them as the show takes off one sees how close they are. A lot of their performance takes place in shadows with light and music playing such an integral part of their show.

The beauty that GOM created is impossible to put into word. The biggest thing one realizes when watching them perform is how important trust is – this would become more evident with their utterly breathtaking finale. The performers are silent throughout most of the show with only the occasional look or smile. This isn't just circus or gymnastics it is something new altogether.

The saying 'they saved their best for last' is a common enough term to not really mean much these days but GOM truly did leave their best for last. As the music picks up and the company comes together for a truly unbelievable finale. I would be doing it a disservice by trying to put it into any type of words how powerful and breathtaking this is.

They masterfully manage to control the space they're in leaving their audience looking on in amazement as they do what should have been the impossible. There are few shows at the fringe that get a spontaneous standing ovation.

<http://www.thenewcurrent.co.uk/#!a-simple-space-review-/c14u9>

THE STAGE

BY LAUREN PAXMAN

6th August 2013

Australian acrobatics ensemble Gravity & Other Myths has produced what is surely one of the happiest shows at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The six piece's A Simple Space kicks off with a cheeky (yes, literally), game of 'strip skipping,' and by the end of the show, Jascha Boyce herself is being used as a skipping rope.

In between, faces are turned into stepping stones, a plank of MDF becomes a very versatile drum and the audience are invited to pelt the six-piece with little plastic balls.

But it's not all light-hearted laughs. The gravity-defying stunts performed are truly breath-taking and the strength, control and tenderness demonstrated by the performers - all lit by four very basic lights which seemingly came straight out of an Argos catalogue - are a joy to watch.

What really sets A Simple Space apart from their equally talented fellow acrobats on the fringe, though, is that they seem as impressed and excited by the show as their audience. The sense of fun that accompanies a low-key competition to see which performer can hold their breath for the longest runs through the whole piece. GOM's grins are contagious, and will stay on your face long after you have left the theatre.

<http://ed.thestage.co.uk/reviews/1903>

SO SO GAY MAGAZINE

BY SAMI LAMINE

9th August 2013

★★★★★

What's it all about? Gravity and Other Myths are one of the most exciting circus ensembles in Australia, and now they're hitting the Fringe to show England what they've got.

Verdict: Walking into A Simple Space, it's difficult to imagine it as a suitable venue for an acro troupe to perform in. The space is small and sparse with only small torch lights casting limited light over the five performers who are visiting the Fringe from Australia. The boys (and girl) instantly get pulses racing by performing a teasing game of fast-paced skipping, and when someone loses control on the rope they lose clothing – that's the type of exercise that appeals to us. The game continues until one of the boys is skipping naked, sadly with his back to the audience. The next fifty minutes are a visual delight with pure skill, strength and guts, and every new death-defying stunt was awarded with huge applause; validation that no one in the audience was disappointed with the show, whatever their reasons for watching. We particularly enjoyed the live percussion which accompanied the action and was played by one of the gymnasts. The addition of comedy throughout really set this group apart, and moments of audience interaction meant that we felt connected to the action throughout. See this show if you like impressive acrobatics, hunky Australians and watched the gymnastics at the Olympics for the same reasons as us. Winky face.

<http://sosogay.co.uk/2013/edinburgh-fringe-review-roundup-week-one/>

BY ROSIE PHENIX-WALKER

13th August 2013

★★★★★

I walked out of this show with a huge smile on my face, and a sudden urge to go and do something, anything – as long as it was great, brave and slightly mad. And I think those are accurate adjectives with which to describe A Simple Space / Gravity and Other Myths: great, brave and slightly mad.

A Simple Space are a group of Australian acrobats, in Edinburgh fresh from sell-out shows at the Adelaide Fringe, where they were as successful as they look to be this year in Scotland.

You will see feats of strength and agility which should be impossible, but are made to look effortless: repeated backflips to a heightening pace of drumbeat, stationary handstands for huge swathes of time, and beautiful multi-person balancing acts. There were moments where every muscle in my body was taut with fear: a woman, standing on the shoulders of a man, standing on the shoulders of another man to make a human tower seventeen feet tall. And just as I thought they'd done the impossible, she stepped lightly upwards onto his head.

The climax of the show was unbelievable, with the female acrobat thrown around the room, arms and legs swinging through the air until she looked like she was flying.

The group are remarkable not only for their immense physical strength, but also for their talent and humour. You will laugh and you will gasp, and you will probably spend some time with your hands over your mouth in awe. Go and see this show.

<http://www.edfestmag.com/fringe/dance/2491-20130813simplespace.html>

FEST MAGAZINE

BY LUCY RIBCHESTER

14th August 2013

★★★★

The company members of Adelaide-based circus troupe Gravity & Other Myths come in like the rest of us, through the auditorium. It's not quite a metaphor, but it does give a bit of an idea of what they are about. Dressed for the beach—except for tell-tale wrist support bands—they use low-fi Ikea-style lamps for lighting and perform on the floor rather than the stage. You could almost be forgiven for believing they are indeed like the rest of us. Until the games begin.

Strip-poker skipping starts us off, the losers each peeling a layer until one man is sent packing to the stage to enact his forfeit. Later, a breath-holding endurance test turns into a hand-standoff between an upside down acrobat and his iron-lunged companions – a cheeky comment on the common description of circus acts as "breathtaking"?

This competitive spirit runs throughout the show, and might give a glimpse into exactly how this fivesome got so good. But there's also plenty of teamwork too, as they climb into heroic towers and create striking zig-zag hieroglyphs from multiple bodies.

All good clean superhuman fun, with an edge of beach play and a hearty street theatre vibe. But then we get to the finale. Far be it for Fest to spoil the surprise but let's just say that Jascha Boyce may well be the most fearless woman at the Fringe. Or possibly the world. With the final five minutes, these amiable Aussie chums will stop your heart and leave you speechless.

https://www.festmag.co.uk/theatre/101888-a_simple_space

16th August 2013

The Australian acrobatics ensemble Gravity & Other Myths aren't in the business of spinning yarns, or rounding off stories; their mythology lies in the stripped down wonder of incredible movements.

Their show, reaching Edinburgh fresh from success in Adelaide, has the confidence to reject the camp glitter of the travelling circus, the sequinned sheen, bright lights, razzle-dazzle meant to make the effortful look as easy as magic. Instead, everything about the performance is designed to speak of effort, not enchantment. The performers dress neutrally, all beige and khaki, inhabiting a simple space lit only by floor mounted lamps, which they re-angle by hand for each act. Sweat drips off their foreheads, and their exhausted panting becomes a kind of performance in itself; for particularly strenuous acts, the music is strategically silenced, and replaced by the harsh rhythm of raggedly-drawn breaths.

The piece is structured by a series of contests, all much more family-friendly than the strip-skipping opening. The performers compete to turn the most backflips, do the longest handstand, pressing the audience to invest in their battles for physical supremacy – the potential for machismo is softened by the atmosphere of fun, and randomness. This feels like a show where anything could happen.

Jascha Boyce, the only woman in the group, gets to inhabit a kind of aerial world of close-cropped heads as stepping stones, or propelled and swung like an elastic band on a catapult. The ensemble's movements are rough and tumbling, making it feel genuinely dangerous when she lets herself fall, unsoftened by the neat poise and perma-smiles of TV gymnastics. There's a kind of invigorating playground energy, which makes it feel like they've imagined a shape, then made it on the spot, high-fiving or shouting YES! when they pull it off. Balanced in triangular sculptures on a single, tottering point, they become imaginary creatures, injecting fantasy into their space of determined reality.

This is a hard-working kind of magic. It could be tempting to hunt out a sort of grim recessionary moral on behalf of the enraptured children in the audience, finding a visual demonstration of the necessary imbalance in inspiration:perspiration ratios. But wrong, too. Instead of story, character and glitter, there's a kind of triumphant spontaneity – it makes you want to try and do a handstand, to slide down the Gilded Balloon banisters or seize that next flyer with your toes, not your fingers.

<http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/a-simple-space/>

THE LIST

BY DONALD HUTERA

21st August 2013

★★★★

Hailing from South Australia, Gravity & Other Myths is a wonderfully strong, fit young company who want the audience to be close enough to see the pleasurable prowess, and the occasional strains or tensions, underlying their acrobatic games.

Lasting just 40 minutes, the show takes place on a simple baize-green stage lit by long-necked adjustable lamps. What gives the back-to-basics production values a boost is our proximity to a handful of performers who are damn good at what they do.

It's all structured loosely round twin themes of friendly competition (skipping rope-stripping; who can backflip the longest; last man standing on his hands while being pelted by the punters with rubber balls) and co-operative trust (four men are human scaffolding, elevating a long bar round which the company's lone, inscrutably calm female rotates; one male, flat on his back, later props her up on his hands while another man stands on the first's stomach). You may have seen some of this before, but probably never so amazingly near.

<http://edinburghfestival.list.co.uk/article/54142-a-simple-space/>

THE SCOTSMAN

KELLY APTER

20th August 2013

★★★

Australian circus troupe Gravity and Other Myths comprises five performers with obscenely good acrobatic skills. Between them, the four men and one woman produce one electrifying shoulder stand, head balance and human tower after another.

Their approach is stripped back and bare, performed on a square of plain carpet. No frills, no fuss, just talent.

But at just over 35 minutes long (rather than the advertised 50) A Simple Space feels like it's over before it's begun. Especially since moments such as stripping while skipping (then dressing again), breath-holding competitions, and getting the audience to throw plastic balls at them, feel like padding that's a step down from their capabilities.

Gravity and Other Myths has incredible balance, bravery and skill on its side, but irrespective of the simplicity, this show still feels less than it should be.

<http://www.edinburgh-festivals.com/blog/2013/08/20/dance-review-a-simple-space/>

THREE WEEKS

BY ELEANOR LANG

21st August 2013

★★★★★

You do not need to know what to expect from this performance, but be prepared to have your breath taken away. This is a super physical theatre piece, set on an intimate and bare stage, and characterised by its performers' command of athleticism, balance and daring acrobatics; these humble, hilarious and friendly Australians have clearly worked incredibly hard to get this good and produce a performance of this standard. Enhancing the work is a talented percussionist who plays exciting live music on an electric drum kit throughout. I found the work inspirational and impressive, and it left me stunned; even hours later, I was still thinking about it. I'd urge anyone to experience it for themselves.

<http://www.threeweeks.co.uk/article/ed2013-physical-review-a-simple-space-gravity-and-other-myths/>

20th August 2013



Entering through the audience, dressed for a sunny day in the park, the cast of A Simple Space began playing games. Skipping in unison, faster and faster until the ropes blurred and one by one they tripped up, the last one standing was the only one who didn't have to take off an item of clothing. This game continued until the loser stripped completely, forfeited to skip naked, face to the wall.

Then there was a breath-holding contest (we should have practised with them) while one of their number tried to stand on his hands for the duration and more handstands to see who could hold up the longest while the audience threw plastic balls at them. In this vein the fun continued, with each game progressively more daring than the last.

The four male performers displayed awe-inspiring strength and skill but female performer Jascha Boyce was terrifyingly, brilliantly daring. Her feats of balance and obvious lack of vertigo demonstrated during the show was as nothing compared to the build up to the gasping finale, which is where the breath-holding experience would have been useful.

The space was simple and the audience was tightly packed in on three sides. In the jaw-dropping denouement there was much flinching as the front rows nearly became involved in the action. The silent screams of the crowd turned to thunderous applause as they nonchalantly bowed as if it were nothing and everyone rose to their feet. This is the first standing ovation I have witnessed at this year's Fringe and no company worked harder for it or deserved it more.

It is no wonder that this unassuming Australian company have won many awards. Self-funded and doing it all themselves – even the live music provided throughout by their creative percussionist - Gravity and Other Myths rely on your support. Do yourself and them a favour: go see it and take all your family and friends.

<http://www.edinburghguide.com/festival/2013/theatre/physicaltheatre/asimplespacereview-13771>

2014

THE BAREFOOT REVIEW

KYM CLAYTON

15th Feb 2014

Go and see this one - all the advertising can be believed. They've been to the Adelaide Fringe before and won awards in 2011 and 2013.

This is human physical circus with a difference. Yes there are the usual dazzling displays of agility and strength, and drop dead buff gorgeous bodies to die for, but it's what it doesn't have which makes the difference.

As the name of the show suggests, everything is stripped back to the bare essentials. The set is nothing more than a stage (suitably padded and sprung of course) and some simple lights. There are no dazzling costumes or makeup or special effects as we have come to expect in other circus acts. This show is really minimalistic, but there is nothing minimalist about what the troupe of eight gets up to.

The program is a celebration of playfulness. Competition and one-upmanship amongst the troupe is a consistent feature of the sequence acts. The games include a rapid skipping competition, for which the guys strip down to their underwear, and the last man standing goes all the way, but with his back to audience in deference of his modesty and presumably to stop the hearts of the ladies (and some of the men?) in the audience from fluttering too rapidly!

Then there is a holding breath competition with one guy standing on his head and not permitted to move until the winner is determined. And another skipping demonstration, where this time the rope is a person! Swinging from the high bar is always impressive in gymnastic competitions, but what if the uprights are comprised of stacks of guys?

Even the muso gets in on the act and becomes a human percussion machine.

It goes on. It's an action packed sixty minutes filled with breath taking displays of human physicality laced with liberal amounts of understated humour. It makes you feel great to be alive!

<http://www.thebarefootreview.com.au/menu/theatre/119-2014-adelaide-reviews/864-a-simple-space.html>

FRINGE REVIEW

ALICE WELBY

16th February 2014

Low Down: 'A Simple Space' is a physical theatre extravaganza presented by 8 (extremely strong and flexible) performers. The crew of eight guys and two gals move their way through a series of mind-bending gymnastics and death-defying stunts, all laced with a subtle comedic edge. One thing is guaranteed—you have never seen bodies do things like this before.

Review: From the outset you can tell this isn't just your average physical theatre group. The eight strong company, wearing an unassuming combination of beige chinos and coloured t-shirts, lure the audience into a false sense of security with a fairly harmless strip-skipping competition.

What follows is far from harmless as the performers guide the audience through a series of death-defying feats, bending their supple bodies in ways that shouldn't be possible, and producing shapes that resemble pretzels rather than human.

As the show progresses, each member show off their individual talent—from hanging off an aerial bar by only her flexed feet, to solving a Rubik's cube while balanced on his head. The show comes full circle to another skipping game, only this time the ropes are human.

Throughout the show there is a definite sense of competition among the group members with their facial expressions and smiles suggesting private jokes, which, far from annoying, only makes the performance more intriguing.

If all this, often heart stopping, excitement wasn't enough, the physical performers are moved from one fluid movement to the next by the live musical styling of the eighth group member. Who, coincidentally, was the winner of strip-skipping (I'll let your imagination wander for a moment).

If you're partial to a bit of non-committal audience participation imagine being handed colourful balls while the performers arrange themselves into a semicircle of handstands, then being instructed to throw them at the inverted cast until each and every one can no longer hold the pose.

This homegrown Aussie group completely exceed all expectations with a winning combination of superior skill, innovative movement and competitive theme. Any initial concerns at the cosy nature of the seating arrangements instantly dissolved the minute these body magicians took to the stage. My only warning would be that it's not for the faint hearted, but if you think you can toughen up for 50 minutes then this is a show I would recommend to all.

<http://www.fringereview.co.uk/fringeReview/5731.html>

TALKING POINTES

JORDAN BETH VINCENT

26th March 2014

The latest circus troupe to storm Melbourne is Adelaide-based Gravity & Other Myths with *A Simple Space*. Both names are apt in this case: the tiny set offering little more than a padded floor and the occasional prop for the seven acrobats who seem bent on defying gravity. This is superb independent circus- a paired down, stripped back, and highly innovative production that will bring the audience to the edge of their seats (and then just as quickly back again to avoid swinging legs and drops of sweat).

As with the best circus, the humour in *A Simple Space* bubbles up to the surface, adding a sense of camaraderie to the serious skill required to turn bodies into scaffolds to be scaled or to land a dozen backflips in a row. At one stage, a performer balances on his head, leaving his arms free to solve a Rubik's Cube- a delightful combination of mental and physical agility, with a bit of nerdiness tossed in.

With thoughtful audience participation and charismatic performances from the entire cast, Gravity & Other Myths demonstrates the magic that can happen when stellar skill is paired with incisive direction and an insatiable curiosity for reimagining familiar patterns and sequences. Moving to a steady beat from percussionist (and occasional performer) Elliot Zoerner, *A Simple Space* flips to its own tune and will no doubt delight audiences wherever it goes.

<http://talkingpointes.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/review-gravity-other-myths-simple-space.html>

(This review was originally written for The Age newspaper.)

LIP MAG

RUBY TURNER

20th March 2014

Harking from Adelaide, Gravity and Other Myths is a multi-award winning ensemble of acrobats who are currently partnering with Darebin Art's Speakeasy to present their performance piece, A Simple Space, at Northcote Town Hall, Melbourne. Gravity and Other Myths are neither big top clowns nor death defying stuntmen, but a wonderfully unified and organic group of performers with comedic flair and an expert way of blending rough and tumble acrobatics with beautiful lucidity and grace.

The performers walk onto the stage and almost immediately begin an elimination game of "strip skipping" until the last man standing removes his final piece of clothing (cue audience whistles). A little gratuitous male nudity never goes astray. The group then spends the next 45 minutes oscillating between carefully curated chaos (bodies flying across the small stage and sight gags abounding) and jaw dropping pieces of acrobatic choreography. Props and stage are minimal and the show is all about the body used as both a tool and as poetry. Heads are balanced on, torsos are offered as jumping platforms and bodies are sent spiralling through space.

A 50 minute acrobat performance could easily fall into a slump of repetition but the group keeps the show interesting from beginning to end and the music plays no small part in this. It is a perfect accompaniment, never overpowering or distracting and sound effects during certain pieces just blend perfectly; an oceanic throb and the sound of water droplets create earthy, serene performances. Silence is also effectively used; it is nail biting to hear a performer's heavy breathing echo through the hall. You can almost hear the subtle shaking of their limbs.

Gravity and Other Myths encourages audience participation, and not in the gut wrenching way that unfortunately shy front row audience members inevitably feel when asked "Would anybody like to volunteer?" People are willingly dragged from their chairs to lie on the ground as a female performer suspends herself in the air above them. Coloured plastic balls are then handed out and thrown (most zealously by two seven year old boys in the front row) at the acrobat as she attempts to remain balanced on her hands. This is circus in the 21st Century.

Northcote Town Hall accommodates the group perfectly. The seating wraps around the small space they perform in and the lighting is sparse but cleverly utilised; it is a blinding spotlight one moment, the next a soft glow that throws the performers shadows on the walls like nimble, elongated ghosts. "Intimate" seems such a hackneyed word to use but it is hard not to feel a sense of affinity when the group performs so honestly and are close enough to make the audience gasp; such as when a performer is flung with controlled abandon under the noses of the punters in the front row.

The show is about to end and a performer balances on a perpendicular pole, feet in the air and clicking a Rubix cube in his hands. I could make this into some sort of apt metaphor about the individual talents of the group coming together harmoniously, but I'm just impressed that this guy completed a Rubix cube in thirty seconds while standing on his goddamn head.

<http://lipmag.com/culture/performance-review-a-simple-space/>

21st May 2014

Fresh from critically acclaimed performances at both the Adelaide Fringe Festival and the renowned Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, Adelaide, Australia circus troupe Gravity & Other Myths bring Spoleto audiences their latest performance piece called A Simple Space. That title is no lie.

No fancy costumes. No elaborate light show. No stirring musical score. Seven performers. One percussionist. And one simple idea. Jascha Boyce, one of the troupe's founding members, put it this way: "For us, A Simple Space is really about showing people a little glimpse of the world of training. The failures as well as the successes. The sweat and the bruises." Given the sneak peeks of the show we've seen online, we have to conclude that Boyce is being modest.

While A Simple Space may be stripped down to essential elements, the performance is anything but simple. An example: Skipping rope? Kid's stuff. How about swapping out the rope and substituting in its place a living, breathing human? Now, you're talking.

Who comes up with this kind of thrilling madness? We caught up with Boyce to find out.

The troupe has its origins in Cirkidz, a youth circus school based in Adelaide. In 2009, after graduating together, the performers decided to continue working as an ensemble. From that basis in friendship, Gravity & Other Myths was born.

"The circus community in Adelaide is still quite small," says Boyce, "However, the majority of it circulates around Cirkidz, as it is not only one of the most equipped training spaces in South Australia but it is also a very supportive environment for artists. The Australian circus industry has expanded substantially over the past few years. Right now seems like the perfect time to be creating acrobatic and physical theater work in Australia."

Spoleto audiences have been treated to a number of physical theater/acrobatic performances in the last few years, but one thing that sets Gravity & Other Myths apart is their sense of humor. The physical demands they take on are no joke, but the troupe's light-hearted style left us wondering, Are they all just in this for the laughs?

"One of the most important things about creating and performing for us is having fun," she said. "If we begin to create something that we do not enjoy we will often find it difficult to pursue it. We are all very close friends both on stage and in day-to-day life, so humour and fun come quite naturally to us on stage. Our closeness as a group also means that fun and laughter are essential to ensure we stay positive and still like each other after spending so much time together."

And they do spend an enormous amount of time together. An average week may include five to seven performances. They allow themselves one day off. When they're not on stage, Boyce told us, "We often will spend some of our spare time training both for the show and also for skills, which are not yet in the show so we ensure that we are still challenging ourselves and keeping it fresh. We try to spend the rest of our time exploring each city we are visiting and connecting with the local community through workshops."

The simplicity the troupe embraces is more than a way to set themselves apart in a competitive field. Keeping things basic, leaving themselves no room to hide behind the typical mainstays of circus performance, often makes their work even more challenging. Why do they do it?

"We have always created work as honestly as possible. We like to be ourselves on stage encouraging real connections with our audiences. This style of performance does have its challenges," says Boyce "We do not have exciting costumes or lighting effects to hide behind — it is simply just us on stage doing what we love. When we make a mistake or fall out of a trick, everyone will probably notice it, but we try to embrace these 'failures' as much as our triumphs within the work, showing audiences that despite the skills we have, we are just normal people as well."

Often cited in the glowing reviews that seem to trail behind them wherever they go, is another element of the troupe's performance style. Strength, flexibility, and sheer inventiveness should be enough to satisfy even the most demanding circus aficionado, but Gravity & Other Myths seem to thrive on audience participation. Aren't there rules about this sort of thing?

"Within our style of performance, which we like to call 'New Circus', there aren't really any rules. Audience participation in an honest and natural way in acrobatic and physical theatre work is definitely encouraged and embraced within our community. The style of audience participation we use is very much lead by the audience, engaging them in a much more personal and visceral way."

By engaging in a "personal and visceral way" one assumes she's referring to the audience being encouraged to lob what appear to be softballs at the performers while they try to maintain one-handed handstands and a variety of daring, "don't-try-this-at-home" feats.

Lastly, we couldn't help but ask about the troupe's name and whether it implied unreported anomalies in the Australian gravitational field that might follow the troupe our way. Boyce did her reassuring best to talk us down.

"We sometimes like to think gravity is a myth but to be honest, without it most of our tricks would be impossible!" she said.

So it's a safe bet that if you find yourself popping out of your seat at the Emmet Robinson Theatre, it won't be due to a suspension of the earth's gravitational integrity. More likely, it will be to applaud these enormously talented folks. Consider A Simple Space a don't miss.

<http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/charleston/a-simple-space-for-serious-fun/Content?oid=4924643>

THE CIRCUS DIARIES

13th June 2014

As I take my seat inside the inflatable purple cow, I'm struck by how close we all are to the small stage, grey-felted like a meeting room podium. How many acrobats are there going to be up there?! My guess of eight (based on the number of small black boxes lined up against the back wall, with a tidy selection of hand-balance poles, chalk-dust and other pieces of unrecognisable kit) turns out to be correct. Seven members of the Gravity & Other Myths company are acrobats, and the eighth, Elliot Zoerner, is a percussionist, most often seen tonight with an electronic drum-kit and lap-top in his own little corner, creating a live score – but at times centre stage as well, taking part in the games with everyone else.

Because, above all, A Simple Space is a communal experience of team spirit, good-natured competition, and togetherness. Amongst not just those on stage, but every single person inside the purple walls (and, interestingly, those outside whose exuberant weekend-starts-here chatter can be heard through the canvas when Zoerner falls silent). There is no enforced audience participation here, but there are opportunities to join in the games being played out by the company if you feel so inclined. We are included; Australian Gravity & Other Myths are generous hosts.

The most impressive balancing act the company perform – physical prowess aside – is between the carefully plotted elements of chance that facilitate real spontaneous reactions, and the precise choreography required for their own self-preservation in the vigorous ensemble acrobatics. Within the first 30 seconds they are building a 3-high tower, and they continue to make and break daring human structures throughout the hour-long show.

The performance is a series of tests – endurance, dexterity, balance and strength – all played by a team who are constantly on the verge of laughter, or naturally breaking into it. They seem to be having the best fun, and we are drawn into that. We may not be able to complete a Rubik's cube whilst balanced on our head like Daniel Liddiard, or stand upright with another human being stood upon our face like Lachlan Binns, but we can join in the clapped, clicked and tapped physical rhythms of Zoerner (at least to a point), and we can hold our breath to see who gives out last, while Jacob Randell tries to beat us all in holding a handstand (his tactic to break down the last two company members into giggles with his noises of strain and discomfort isn't really cheating, just competitive spirit).

A playful humour runs throughout the show and each artist brings their own personality to the performance in their pride at achievement, frustration at failure, and in the real exertion we see and hear as sweat drips down each panting face. The 'concentration' faces are a picture as the company race each other to create seven special somethings for us out of their props.

Physically, Gravity & Other Myths' forté is acrobalance and pitching work. Their choreography is inventive and amusing, at times beautiful and at others blunt enough to make me flinch. Over the course of the hour we're treated to so many moments of connection that we're bound to see things we've never encountered before, odd basing positions, and novel balances. Early on, I'm impressed by the inverted trapeze, built from the ground up rather than hung and, later, by Jascha Boyce's splits across the heads of two moving 2-high towers. I've never seen a 3-high tower with each layer facing opposite directions before, and an unusual 'keepie-uppie' routine between Boyce, Binns, and Triton Tunis-Mitchell enters a whole new realm of contact dance.

When the black boxes are bought forward and passed around the audience for us to take out coloured plastic balls, we are told, 'When you throw, throw hard, ok?' As the acrobats get into handstand positions around the stage, we don't need a signal. We've gone feral. We want to knock down these human pins, glad of another opportunity to join the games.

The final choreography of swung, spun and flung girls is as mind-boggling as fractals, and the calling out of the tricks' names as they're worked adds to the already zinging energy. The jazz of the backing mix keeps us relaxed despite the fast pace, and the routine is never frenetic, always confident.

And then, all too suddenly it's over. Tears well up in my eyes. I've been having such a good time. A Simple Space is high-class performance, and also remains true to circus' inclusive, populist roots. Yes, I'd see it again, with pleasure.

<http://thecircusdiaries.com/2014/06/14/a-simple-space-by-gravity-other-myths/>

BROADWAY WORLD

DEBRA CHARLTON

27th May 2014

GRAVITY AND OTHER MYTHS is an Australian physical theatre troupe that redefines the boundaries of traditional circus entertainment. Featuring seven acrobats and a percussionist, the ensemble's astonishing feats of physical strength, rhythm, flexibility and precision teamwork delighted audiences at Charleston's Spoleto Festival during the festival's opening weekend.

The troupe performed their award-winning piece, A SIMPLE SPACE, in the Emmett Robinson Theatre on the College of Charleston campus. A full house of around 400 audience members was seated around four sides of a simple tumbling mat. At the corners of the mat, lighting poles supported lamps that were turned on and off manually by the performers throughout the performance. Costumes were simple t-shirts and pants for the men, and sports bras and dance shorts for the women. The simplicity of the staging elements placed full focus on the amazing physicality of these engaging young performers and their gravity-defying stunts.

Audience members seated in the first row were mere inches away as performers went through a highly choreographed and thrilling sequence of playful acrobatic feats. The troupe members played strip jumprope, dove from heights into the arms of waiting castmates and even balanced on their heads while solving a Rubic's cube.

The spatial proximity between audience and performer evoked audible laughs, ooh and ahhs from the spectators, as the troupe tumbled and spun a hair's-breath away. Audience members were invited to get in on the fun during one sequence involving pit balls; during another sequence, a member of the troupe balanced on the bodies of cast members and audience members lying in a circle on the mat. The shared comraderie between performers and spectators spilled over into the lobby after the show, when troupe members assembled to greet and chat with audience members.

The six men and two women held the audience breathless for an unforgettable celebration of the human body and the power of play. It was 53 minutes of unqualified delight.

<http://www.broadwayworld.com/south-carolina/article/BWW-Reviews-A-SIMPLE-SPACE-Thrills-Spoleto-Audiences-20140527>



Physical Theatre takes many forms but it would be an injustice to what Gravity and other Myths have created with A Simple Space to say that they are your average physical theatre group. Together they manage to reveal a show that is not quite what it seems, having fun with each other, while bringing the audience in as close to the action as possible.

I first saw A Simple Space in Edinburgh last year and already the multiple award winning group had gained an impressive fringe following. From the second the show started one knew that this was something special but what it led to was a jaw dropping surprise. Every moment held your breath to the point where one had to remember to breath, blink and you might miss something.

The new show combines their exceptional acrobatics, original music and live percussion by Elliot Zoerner, and great use of light that does the near impossible, they surpass themselves. After their opening - the first example of how they work together as a company - Elliot Zoerner, Jacob Randell and Lachlan Binns start a jump-rope competition - much to the delight of the audience as soon as they realised they were going to get their pound of flesh.

There is a sense of fun and a competitive spirit between the eight strong company that they maintain throughout the hour. But rather than it being a challenge to see who is 'best' they each showcase their own individual skills which underpins the passion of the company as a whole.

Through the constant applause one sits back, once again, not breathing or blinking, to see Jascha Boyce and Rhiannon Cave-Walker place their bodies in shapes one would think humanly impossible. And yet when one thinks there can't be any more possible surprises Daniel Liddiard proves me wrong.

The power of the show lies in the majesty of their relationships and the warmth they give out from the stage. They never make what they do seem easy. The build up of their performance is not just to show what they can do but to illustrate to the audience how much they need to trust each other, literally placing their lives in each others hands. Their finale is quite something to take ones breath away.

Gravity and other Myths originality and passion for what they do is evident with every moment the company are on stage. They come on as a group and perform as a group with remarkable, and visible, respect for each other and for their audience. As ones eyes flutter all over the stage one can't help but notice their smiles, wonder about the in-jokes, and the gentle ribbing.

What they create is something unique that is as powerful as it is awe-inspiringly beautiful leaving the audience breathless with anticipation, greedily wanting more even if we've not quite digested the last incredible stunt.

<http://www.thenewcurrent.co.uk/#!udderbelly-a-simple-space/cjiw>

SEEN AND HEARD

JIM PRITCHARD

4th June 2014

In the post-Cirque du Soleil world 'circus' means something other to a modern generation than it does to those of an older vintage when it meant gaudy costumes, clowns, jugglers, knife throwers and acrobats, plus (hopefully well looked after) exotic animals ... and accompanying sawdust. I still hanker for that type of spectacle in a tent on a local playing field surrounded by a jumble of caravans but it a type of traditional entertainment that is in decline particularly since, especially in this country, people apparently do not want to see, even domestic animals, performing for their entertainment. Cirque du Soleil describes itself as a 'dramatic mix of circus arts and street entertainment' and has evolved over the years so that its various incarnations are a synthesis of circus skills of the various traditions throughout the world but giving each its own central theme and storyline whilst blending it with music and imaginative lighting.

The antithesis of this type of extravaganza is the evening of 'physical theatre' presented by 'Gravity and Other Myths' a talented and athletic troupe (six men and two women) from Australia whose unique close-up show *A Simple Space* can be seen until the 6th July in the splendid upside-down purple cow tent at the Udderbelly Festival on the South Bank. This Fringe show has been well received wherever it has been performed and London gets an opportunity to admire their skilful presentation. The publicity uses the terms 'hypnotic' and 'beguiling' and that it is undoubtedly is in parts as many times the lines are blurred between all the balancing, tumbling and other gymnastics we see and it is sometimes – using simple lighting effects and percussive music – quite close to modern dance. Certainly the opening section where to shouts of 'falling' individual performers almost spontaneously drop backwards – knowing they will be caught by the arms of another – demands a high level of choreography. There are several sections of ensemble movement like this in the 50 minutes show.

The 'simple space' in question is a large black mat we see on entering the intimate auditorium – there are few props used and certainly never any safety wires. There is seating on three sides of the mat with some only inches away from the cast and all the incessant action. It's naturally all very intimate and allows for audience participation, such as when the very light and limber Jascha Boyce steps across her fellow performers and some very willing people who have been plucked from their front row seats. Later there is a contest when everyone stands on their head and the audience is invited to pelt them with brightly-coloured balls until there is the last man – or in this case woman – standing ... or not standing, you know what I mean!

Actually that this is 'stripped back' circus is never more real than when the eight strong company soon after the start lure the audience into a false sense of security with a fairly harmless strip-skipping competition that was 'won' (I'll leave that to your imagination) by the musician amongst them, Elliot Zoerner. It was his simple percussion and all the other musical and sound effects that – surprisingly subtly – underpinned some of the fluid motion we were seeing.

As the show continues, everyone show off their individual talent whether it is hanging off an aerial bar by only her flexed feet, solving a Rubik's Cube – or holding his breath the longest – while balanced on his head. The show comes to an end with another skipping game, only this time the 'ropes' are human! Add to this there are lots of times when they stack themselves into towers, throw each other about (at one time as if it is trapeze act without the equipment) or contort their bodies into improbable counter-balanced

shapes ... and there is also an energy-sapping back somersault 'competition'. All this is interspersed by more light-hearted moments such as when they all create balloon animals behind their backs.

It is all engagingly 'simple' in its own right and although outwardly there is a sense of competition among them all because of their knowing 'Look at me isn't this good' smiles, I suspect the same thing happens at every performance and that is where the importance of 'choreography' behind most of what we saw should be acknowledged.

This enthusiastic and very welcome group from 'Down Under' brought nearly all of the packed audience to their feet with a winning combination of good humour, agility, bravery and innovative movement – and this was thoroughly deserved. If you know a lot about the history of 'circus' then not all of this will be new to you but that will not be the audience probably coming to the Udderbelly Festival so I wholeheartedly recommend 'A Simple Space'.

I had one lasting thought however – why was it only really the two girls (Jascha Boyce and Rhiannon Cave-Walker) who got thrown around?

http://seenandheard-international.com/2014/06/choreography-and-circus-skills-combine-in-a-simple-space/?doing_wp_cron=1420465750.8055849075317382812500

THE GAY UK

CHRIS BRIDGES

8th June 2014

In the London premiere of the show that has captivated sell-out festival audiences around the world, seven young acrobats compete for your laughter, gasps and applause with non-stop, mind-boggling feats of breath-taking acrobatics. Spend a riveting hour with one of Australia's hottest young circus ensembles, Gravity & Other Myths, as they push themselves to their physical limits and beyond in a captivating show of physicality, skill and daring.

I have to confess that I can barely stand up without falling over so these young (and rather lithe and good looking) Australian acrobats were always going to impress me. The show is a stripped back, pure acrobatics show that manages to captivate and entertain with aplomb for an exhilarating hour. The show ranges from human pyramids, death defying aerial manoeuvres and feats of strength through to tongue in cheek comedy, absurdity and joyful physicality. Part circus, part gymnastics and part contemporary dance, this show had the audience on its' feet with a loud and boisterous standing ovation at the end of the show.

Did I mention the men too? It's worth the price of the ticket alone just to see them. They're muscular lithe and not afraid to take of their tops (and at one point trousers too).

<http://www.thegayuk.com/magazine/4574334751/THEATRE-REVIEW-A-Simple-Space-Udderbelly-London/8236122>

THEGIZZLE REVIEW

ED NIGHTINGALE

11th June 2014

★★★★

The Udderbelly Festival at Southbank really is a little slice of Edinburgh in London. And just like at the Fringe Festival, it's an opportunity to see something a little different, something you wouldn't normally see in a theatre space, something like A Simple Space.

Gravity & Other Myths are a young troupe of acrobats from Australia with extraordinary skill. Since forming in 2009 they have performed and won awards across the globe and now bring their performance to London for the first time.

As the title suggests, the show takes place in a blank space with only simple lighting to highlight each feat of the human body. Nothing more is needed to dazzle the audience besides their incredible strength, impressive flexibility, amazing agility and utter bravery. The performers really do push themselves to their physical limits, using minimal apparatus as well as their bodies: the two girls traverse the stage by only setting foot on the men who align themselves in increasingly elaborate positions; the performers flip and throw themselves around the space with seemingly reckless abandon; they stand three people tall on each other's heads; one performer solves a Rubik's cube whilst balancing upside down on his head; and much more. It's as unbelievable as you can imagine, all performed to the rhythmic propulsions of a live drummer.

With no narrative as such, this is a performance of pure skill. Yet the seven performers create an air of honesty and amusement that permeates the whole show, each 'scene' performed with a knowing wink to the audience, daring us to even imagine what they'll do next. The audience's constant gasps of disbelief add an extra layer to the show's soundtrack, alongside grunts and heavy breathing from the performers under the physical strains of the act. It makes for a show that's as erotic as it is entertaining, exhausting for audience and performers alike.

A Simple Space is an amazing display of acrobatic skill – whether you're in London or are visiting Edinburgh for the Fringe Festival this year, this is a must-see.

<http://www.thegizzlereview.com/2014/06/a-simple-space-udderbelly-festival.html>

TIMEOUT LONDON

DAISY BOWIE-SELL

5th June 2014

★★★★

You probably don't go to the circus expecting stripping, but that's (part of) what you get in this Australian acrobatic show: after shedding item after item of clothing, a hairy, tree-trunk-thighed man then skips around lot while in the buff. That image may fill you with terror, but it's just one of the witty, family-friendly (I promise) moments in this imaginatively no-frills circus from Down Under.

In 'A Simple Space', five men and two women acrobats try to be the last one standing in everything from skipping to balloon modelling to holding their breath. It brings an element of traditional clowning to Gravity & Other Myths's show, which is about as lo-fi as they come.

The company rely purely on physical strength and cheeky grins to win us over. This down-to-earth bunch want us to gasp at their brawn and bravura. Everything is done on a completely bare stage with no wires or props, accompanied by excellent musician Elliot Zoerner (who at one point becomes an amazing human drum machine). The show starts with a high-energy race: performers shout 'Falling!' and someone runs to catch them before they hit the ground. It's so loose and spontaneous, it feels like the cast are improvising.

They aren't, of course, and some of the stunts – Daniel Liddiard balancing on his head while solving a Rubik's cube, Rhiannon Cave-Walker being thrown across the stage like a rag doll, three performers balancing on each other's shoulders – are incredible. But the piece's real charm comes from the feeling that you could probably also enjoy a beer with this lot down the pub afterwards.

<http://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/a-simple-space>

THE STAGE

HONOUR BAYES

6th June 2014

★★★★

Australian acrobats Gravity and Other Myths tumble about the stage in the sort of khaki shorts and pastel tops we're used to seeing in GAP adverts. As they test their own abilities to create and maintain mind-bending holds, handstands and backflips, there's a fond, almost sibling rivalry. Unlike many of their Australian contemporaries - who are pushing the boundaries of burlesque circus - they appear as squeaky clean as the American retailer.

A Simple Space is anything but bland, however. Through an increasingly complex programme of work, we are moved from giggling to gasping. The neat running time means we're never allowed to acclimatise to these amazing feats and get bored.

There's a young energy to this company but it's not an unfocused or unskilled one; these guys - and gals - know what they're doing. The impressive mathematical precision to the lifts and holds - as though they are human parts of a physics experiment about weights - adds gravitas. This attention to detail is given a cheeky wink when one of the troupe solves a Rubik's cube while balancing on his head, on a thin metal pole, in about 20 seconds.

Percussionist Elliot Zoerner provides a live score that mixes drum beats with dreamy techno and perfectly complements the skilled rough and tumble on stage. This is less like watching a circus troupe and more like watching lion cubs play fighting on a cleverly edited BBC documentary - and it's all the more delightful and original for that.

<http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/39927/a-simple-space-img>

SO SO GAY

CHARLOTTE HIGGINS

6th June 2014

★★★★★

The Udderbelly Festival is always a Spring treat on the Southbank, and the inclusion of award winning acrobatic ensemble Gravity and Other Myths may very well be the cherry on the top. A troupe of eight young acrobats have left the sparkle and splendour of the circus behind to become an innovative acrobat and physical theatre company whose physical triumphs astound and delight.

A Simple Space is an inclusive and absorbing show. Having said that we doubt any audience member could happily jump up on stage and join in with the tumbling, swinging and general displays of physical fitness. What makes Gravity and other Myths so appealing as a company, is the overriding feeling that the performers love every minute of the show. Their passion and sincere pleasure in their work is infectious. Every whoop or gasp from the audience seemed only to spur the performers onto new heights of daring and, heights. Radiant smiles, and knowing smirks highlighted moments of intimacy between performer and audience transcending the show from watching bodies move, to watching people excel. From the first 'Falling!' the pace of the show is relentless and absorbing, all the way to the final swinging sequence. Ensemble displays were cleverly punctured by a 'mini-series' of games and skits. Strip-Skip was particularly enjoyable, we're not sure we've ever wanted a virulent young gentleman to trip over a rope with quite so much gusto before.

Elliot Zoerner was not only a well-received player of Strip-Skip but also provided the original and shoulder jiggling soundtrack for the show. His beats were a wonderful reflection of the troupe and their antics, with his body-beating a moment of percussive perfection.

Gravity and Other Myths are a troupe that epitomise the true meaning of ensemble; a collection of performers that are in tune and harmony with each other. Dressed in subdued and casual clothes, the simplicity of the design alongside clever lamp usage focused the attention on their bodies and the exquisite nature of the human form. A must see. An absolute must.

<http://sosogay.co.uk/2014/review-simple-space-underbelly-festival-southbank/>

THIS IS CABARET

9th June 2014

The award-winning acrobatic show ***A Simple Space***, from Australian circus ensemble Gravity & Other Myths, made its London premiere at the Udderbelly Festival last week. It focuses on the use of space – not only the space on the stage, but the space between bodies, the space between acts, and the space between performers and audience. Each of these seems simple at first but, after being twisted and turned in our understanding, become more complex and daring than could have otherwise been imagined.

From the beginning, nothing comes between the audience and the performers. They line up to face us wearing only trousers, t-shirts and smiles, immediately creating an intimate experience. Their expression says, “Just look at the fun we’re going to have”.

This low-key start soon erupts into an acrobatic version of the corporate trust-game we all loathe so well, as one performer shoots across the stage, flings their arm in the air and shouts “Falling!”. Madcap dashes ensue, as performers fall about the stage, the others rushing to catch them before they hit the ground. This childish game sets the tone and pace of the show, where playful performance follows boisterous romp follows daring feat of balance, strength and skill. Many moments are all of the above.

The space the acrobats use is devoid of equipment; they primarily use each other. A stand-out example is when one performer lies down, another is placed atop him lengthways, on his side, and a third stands on the feet of the first. They then roll, step and contort into complex, risky and breath-taking towers and shapes, with only the first acrobat ever touching the floor.

The props they do use are not those typically associated with acrobatics; skipping ropes, plastic coloured balls, balloon animals and a Rubik’s cube all make appearances, leading into several never-before-seen acts of balance and ingenuity. I’ve certainly never witnessed seven acrobats compete to be the fastest at making a balloon-animal dog behind their backs.

The liveliness and humour of the “falling” game are prevalent throughout the show, which culminates in a high-energy scene where two members of the company are flung through the air by the others, like sacks of sugar being loaded onto a boat, spinning, thrown and passed among the ensemble with such speed that on several occasions it seems impossible they will be caught. One daring toss has members of the front row flinging themselves back in their seats, sure they are about to get a lap full of acrobat.

A Simple Space is filled with tumultuous humour, energy, creativity, colour and fun. The performers never miss an opportunity to make a joke with the audience and, luckily, never miss a catch either.

<http://www.thiscabaret.com/review-simple-space-gravity-myths/>

THE OTHER BRIDGE PROJECT

POLY GIANNIBA

5th June 2014

Seven acrobats – five men and two women – pick their way through a series of challenges, the things a child would think of on a lazy afternoon. Except the challenges are really hard: can you solve a Rubik's cube balancing on your head? Can you hold your breath longer than I can stand upside down? Can you backflip longer and faster than anyone else? Can you roll over me without touching the ground?

If A Simple Space was a person, it would be a cheeky five year old. Skipping rope with pants around his ankles. Or holding her breath jumping from sofa to armchair, pretending the floor is a river full of crocodiles. For all its physical daring and breathtaking precision, it's the spirit of childhood that makes the show so much fun. Anyone remember Pippi Longstocking and the horse balancing on her head? It's a bit like that but for real.

There is no set but the space has its own precise specifications: "4 metres wide x 6.5 metres deep with 6 metres overhead clearance. Audience wraps around front and sides". If the technical specifications are important for managing the physical fits, the audience at breathing distance works its own magic. These are not abstract bodies drawing shapes. It's the exertion and shortage of breaths that make it special.

After the curtain call, the company members were picking props from the stage and a little girl from the audience continued to throw plastic balls at them. It sums it up beautifully. Like a "can we play some more?" at the end of the day.

<https://theotherbridgeproject.wordpress.com/2014/06/05/review-a-simple-space-by-gravity-and-other-myths-udderbelly-festival-southbank/>

SEEN AND HEARD

JIM PRITCHARD

8th June 2014

In the post-Cirque du Soleil world 'circus' means something other to a modern generation than it does to those of an older vintage when it meant gaudy costumes, clowns, jugglers, knife throwers and acrobats, plus (hopefully well looked after) exotic animals ... and accompanying sawdust. I still hanker for that type of spectacle in a tent on a local playing field surrounded by a jumble of caravans but it a type of traditional entertainment that is in decline particularly since, especially in this country, people apparently do not want to see, even domestic animals, performing for their entertainment. Cirque du Soleil describes itself as a 'dramatic mix of circus arts and street entertainment' and has evolved over the years so that its various incarnations are a synthesis of circus skills of the various traditions throughout the world but giving each its own central theme and storyline whilst blending it with music and imaginative lighting.

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The 'simple space' in question is a large black mat we see on entering the intimate auditorium – there are few props used and certainly never any safety wires. There is seating on three sides of the mat with some only inches away from the cast and all the incessant action. It's naturally all very intimate and allows for audience participation, such as when the very light and limber Jascha Boyce steps across her fellow performers and some very willing people who have been plucked from their front row seats. Later there is a contest when everyone stands on their head and the audience is invited to pelt them with brightly-coloured balls until there is the last man – or in this case woman – standing ... or not standing, you know what I mean!

Actually that this is 'stripped back' circus is never more real than when the eight strong company soon after the start lure the audience into a false sense of security with a fairly harmless strip-skipping competition that was 'won' (I'll leave that to your imagination) by the musician amongst them, Elliot Zoerner. It was his simple percussion and all the other musical and sound effects that – surprisingly subtly – underpinned some of the fluid motion we were seeing.

As the show continues, everyone show off their individual talent whether it is hanging off an aerial bar by only her flexed feet, solving a Rubik's Cube – or holding his breath the longest – while balanced on his head. The show comes to an end with another skipping game, only this time the 'ropes' are human! Add to this there are lots of times when they stack themselves into towers, throw each other about (at one time as if it is trapeze act without the equipment) or contort their bodies into improbable counter-balanced

shapes ... and there is also an energy-sapping back somersault 'competition'. All this is interspersed by more light-hearted moments such as when they all create balloon animals behind their backs.

It is all engagingly 'simple' in its own right and although outwardly there is a sense of competition among them all because of their knowing 'Look at me isn't this good' smiles, I suspect the same thing happens at every performance and that is where the importance of 'choreography' behind most of what we saw should be acknowledged.

This enthusiastic and very welcome group from 'Down Under' brought nearly all of the packed audience to their feet with a winning combination of good humour, agility, bravery and innovative movement – and this was thoroughly deserved. If you know a lot about the history of 'circus' then not all of this will be new to you but that will not be the audience probably coming to the Udderbelly Festival so I wholeheartedly recommend 'A Simple Space'.

I had one lasting thought however – why was it only really the two girls (Jascha Boyce and Rhiannon Cave-Walker) who got thrown around?

<http://seenandheard-international.com/2014/06/choreography-and-circus-skills-combine-in-a-simple-space/>

THE GUARDIAN

LYN GARDNER

9th June 2014

★★★

Beginning with a sequence of falling in which the troupe repeatedly hurl themselves to the ground, but are always caught in the nick of time by their colleagues, the Australian circus company Gravity & Other Myths lives up to its name in this crowd-pleasing, good natured show performed by seven highly skilled acrobats.

This award-winning piece is never short of thrills and the title doesn't lie. The space is small, simple and almost entirely bare, creating a sweaty intimacy. It's an idea that has been exploited by others to terrific effect, including Casus with the brilliant Knee Deep.

This show is no less dextrous, the performers are as talented, and the sheer number of people of stage is part of the piece's appeal. In a sequence towards the end, where human bodies are used like skipping ropes, or passed around in a swinging motion by the rest of the cast, it feels as if the danger is productively real for cast and audience. But the packaging sometimes gets in the way.

Many of the most interesting circus companies, probably aware that the average audience is not necessarily the best judge of the difficulty of tricks, are increasingly exploring what it means to be human through on-stage relationships, and touching on issues such as trust and effort. The latter is apparent here: the cast's laboured breathing becomes almost part of the soundtrack, a reminder that for all their impressive physical achievements, they are flesh and blood.

However, the show sets itself up in such a way that you can't quite trust what might be genuine and what is staged, including the breathing. This is summed up by a sequence in which the audience throw plastic balls at the cast, who are precariously balanced on their hands like human skittles. It's fun, but however hard you throw the ball, it won't have a real impact. Nothing is genuinely at stake.

It feels much the same in several other apparently competitive exercises, including strip skipping (family-friendly) and a holding-your-breath task – when the cast pit themselves against each other, but not in any meaningful way. Everyone always comes up smiling. The result is an entertaining hour with wow factor and cheeky, cheesy humour. Just don't expect it to mean anything, or to touch you emotionally.

COMMENT RESPONSE:

This was a truly spectacular and original show, with seemingly everything at stake. I can only imagine this reviewer's meagre score is resulting from feelings of inadequacy in the presence of such super-human feats. How strange to belittle these feats by highlighting one of the few less risky segments to show that "nothing is genuinely at stake". This particular segment delighted our audience, with members both young and old hurling light plastic balls at the balancing troupe members. How sad then to be a Guardian critic, where such fun is viewed as disingenuous because it poses no physical risk, even in a show packed with risk. Perhaps this critic would have preferred us to be armed with cricket balls? Maybe only then would she be emotionally touched.

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jun/08/a-simple-space-gravity-and-other-myths-review>

EXPRESS

ELLA BUCHAN

6th June 2014

★★★★★

AND now for something completely different... The ethereally strong performers in A Simple Space at the Udderbelly, on London's Southbank, make other circus shows look positively weedy

Big tops and arenas regularly vibrate with "oohs" and "ahhs" as audiences gasp at every gravity-defying flip and twist.

But it isn't very often you get to hear every "ouch", "argh" and "oops!" from the stage during a circus show.

The acrobats who perform in A Simple Space, now showing on London's Southbank at the Udderbelly Festival, don't hide the huge physical effort that goes into every move.

The five men and two women who make up Gravity And Other Myths bend, flip and leap around the 6.5m x 4m black mat that makes up the stage.

The audience is seated on three sides, so close to the action you can almost feel every deep, guttural breath.

And that only makes this show even more terrifyingly, jaw-droppingly impressive.

There are few props, aside from a pole and a Rubik's cube. The only equipment these guys need are their bodies.

One minute they are engaged in a frenetic tumbling on the spot contest or game of strip skipping, the next they are balancing on each other's thighs, backs, shoulders and noses.

The show opens with the troupe lined up against the wall, poised for action. Then, to the beat of a single drum, they proceed to fling themselves about the stage, dropping to the floor from various heights and in various directions to the call of "falling!"

It all feels a little amateur dramatics for the first minute or so, but the wit that permeates the entire performance rescues it from tweeness - such as when one poor guy's call of "falling" goes unanswered and his fellow performers let him crash to the floor. Where else would you see a human skipping rope, or watch a guy do a headstand on a pole while solving a Rubik's cube behind his back?

Once you've seen a spectacular circus display like Cirque du Soleil, it's easy to become disenchanted. Wipe off some of the slickness and chuck in a few fistfuls of grit and that enchantment is reawakened.

A Simple Space peels away the slick, shiny skin to reveal the pure muscle of acrobatic talent - powered by loud, heavy grunts and breaths that shudder through the theatre.

Listen carefully and you might even be able to hear their heartbeats. Or that could be your own heart thumping, as you leave high on the thrill of this unique spectacle.

<http://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/theatre/480698/A-Simple-Space-Udderbelly-review>

PLAYS TO SEE

KATERINA YANNOULI

6th June 2014

★★★★

Coming from Adelaide, Gravity and Other Myths is a multi-award winning ensemble of acrobats, neither big top clowns nor death defying stuntmen, but a wonderfully unified group of performers that blend expertly rough and tumble acrobatics with humour and grace.

A Simple Space is a deceptive name and one does not know exactly what to expect. With minimal props and a great use of lighting and percussion, the artists show how much can be done through physical strength alone; jumping, twisting, flying, spinning and exploding around the space. Torsos are offered as jumping platforms and bodies are sent spiralling through space, three artists all connected and intertwined roll across the stage, using each other as support. They can even solve a Rubik's cube while balancing on a perpendicular pole! It is impossible to describe the complexity and variety of combinations and it would spoil the surprise! Occasionally the audience is called to participate, so be prepared to face the challenge...

A 50 minute acrobat performance could easily fall into a slump of repetition but the group keeps the show interesting from beginning to end, with the occasional nail-biting, jaw dropping moments when one is too scared to look and yet cannot peel the eyes away.

A feat of physicality and co-ordination. Do not miss!

<http://playstosee.com/a-simple-space/>

THOMAS JONES

7th June 2014

The members of award-winning Australian acrobatics ensemble Gravity & Other Myths outskip, outshine and outsmart each other in their unique circus show A Simple Space at London's Udderbelly Festival.

"It's the simple things in life that are the most extraordinary." The sentiment of these words, from Brazilian poet and writer Paulo Coelho resonate throughout A Simple Space. Created by award-winning Australian circus ensemble Gravity & Other Myths (GOM), this performance which is made up of just seven smiling acrobats, one musician, a couple of low-rise lighting rigs, and a small stage, is making 'simple' sexy.

Essentially, the show does what it says on the tin. Everything GOM use to create A Simple Space would probably fit in their carry on luggage. All of the apparatus and props are stored on stage. There are no special effects, or elaborate costumes. No characters, storylines, or attempts to transport the audience to another dimension. It's about these performers displaying who they are and what they can do in a real and honest way.

Though the design and delivery is steeped in simplicity, the acrobatics and stunts are anything but. The opening sequence is like an up-tempo trust exercise taken to extreme heights. There is so much going on at such a rapid pace. A three-person tower is constructed out of nowhere, and then before you can applaud, the pieces start falling to the ground, only to be saved by other acrobats, who seconds before were seen falling backwards themselves. It's chaotic, crazy, and could never be described as simple.

GOM's flexibility, strength and endurance are outstanding, but what is equally impressive is the ingenuity and creativity they have exhibited by testing the boundaries of what is physically possible, and entertaining to watch. They build the frame of a two-storey house complete with a gable roof using their bodies and an epic leg split. Two of them climb atop another performer's body like they are bouldering, securing footholds between different body parts, to keep themselves from stepping on the ground. And there is a never-ending multilevel human tightrope, which a performer steps across, one head, hand or face at a time.

The impact of the performance is intensified because the audience are seated so close to the action. You can hear the shortness of breath after GOM compete in game of speed skipping. You can see the little wobble of their heads as a weight is transferred onto their shoulders. In one act a few audience members are even invited on to the stage to act as steppingstones, which a performer walks on, and jumps between.

The show connects with the audience on another level, taking them back to a simpler time of ball pits and playground games. The acrobats each let their inner child loose as they battle it out in handstand competitions, or see who can hold their breath for the longest, or race to make balloon animals. One mastermind solves a Rubik's cube under the most extreme circumstances, and the male performers create a makeshift swing set/spinning wheel using the female performers, who are thrown, spun, and swung in every direction.

There is a nice innocence behind everything that is presented in A Simple Space, particularly as no one is keeping score, and the attempts of the performers are applauded as loudly as the triumphs. But if circus had a scoreboard, GOM would be right at the top.

<http://www.kangrooviews.com/review-simple-space-gravity-myths-udderbelly-festival/>

A YOUNGER THEATRE

AMY MERRIGAN

7th June 2014

A Simple Space is rather like watching up close the kind of amazing acrobatics you see on Britain's Got Talent, but with all the cheesy 'I Have a Dream' nonsense firmly removed, and a great sense of humour left in its place. It feels like the actors have thought "What will be fun?" – and then done exactly that. The show is a mixture of crazy stunts and hilarious games: for instance, who can do the most back flips to rapidly speeding up music? Which is a game I, of course, play ALL the time.

We also got to enjoy a kind of strip poker meets skipping rope challenge (this one is good, and I think needs to be made into a drinking game). There was body drumming, walking on audience members' hands and one poor soul attempting an upside down Rubik's Cube solving test – I won't spoil it and tell you if he succeeded or not.

No matter how many jogs you have been on this week, when watching this show you will feel like the unfit, fat blob of physical worthlessness that let's be honest, in comparison to these guys, you kind of are. The feats that this rather wonderfully-named acrobatic ensemble Gravity & Other Myths perform caused my friend to frequently shriek profanities into my ear. We gasped, we laughed and I spent most of the hour with my mouth gaping, rather unflatteringly, wide open.

I would never have chosen to go and see an acrobatics show, and when I found out what I was going to be watching I must confess I inwardly sighed. But I could not have been more wrong. A Simple Space is one of the most unexpectedly amazing pieces of theatre I have seen... maybe ever?

It is such a simple idea: put eight people on a stage and watch them do unbelievable things set against a backdrop of cleverly pared down lighting and music design. Many other such acrobatic shows could easily, I'm sure, sag in the middle and soon become repetitive, but it's the personalities in Gravity & Other Myths that hold it together.

Despite not using any words or even noises, apart from the odd aside or grunt, these eight people jumping around on a stage manage to give a greater lesson about how to create character relationships and camaraderie than a hundred plays I can think of. You feel like you know a little bit about every one of them. It's a little like Cirque du Soleil meets The History Boys, but in a really good way.

The hour flies by and I can guarantee you won't be disappointed. With tickets starting at £15, A Simple Space is so worth a watch. My favourite part, to sum it all up, essentially consists of a group of really good-looking guys throwing some really good-looking girls around the stage – set to jaunty music. It's brilliant.

<http://www.ayoungertheatre.com/review-simple-space-udderbelly-festival/>

MONTREAL GAZZETTE

PAT DONNELLY

16th July 2014

A Simple Space is a playful, unassuming show performed by two women and five men (one of whom is an onstage musician). It proved exceptionally popular, with crowds demanding multiple encores after each show. A holdover performance was added.

This troupe sets up such sports-like competitions as strip-skipping (missing a step demands shedding a garment). One performer solves a Rubik's cube while standing on his head. The soundtrack is upbeat, the complicity of the performers remarkable. They're like a gang of teenagers hanging out in the park.

During an hour-long series of refreshingly inventive numbers at L'Agora de la dance, they won devoted fans who lined up to chat with them and buy T-shirts after the show.

<http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/local-arts/montreal-complement-cirque-festival-had-a-spectacular-run>

MONTREAL RAMPAGE

NANCY BERMAN

12th July 2014

The stage is a small rectangle, with a set of lights at each corner. The performers — five men and two women — enter, turning the lights on. One guy sits down in front of an electronic drum set and laptop and begins playing an aggressive dance beat. One acrobat screams, “Falling!” and starts falling backwards into the empty space behind her. Before hitting the floor one of the guys runs from his corner of the stage and catches her, but before he does, another acrobat has already screamed, “Falling!” from another corner of the stage, and another performer has run to catch him. What is unfolding in front of us is basically the “trust” game that many of us have been forced to play at one time or another (camp, a workplace team-building session), where you fall backwards into another person’s arms. But here the game is ratcheted up many, many notches. Everything moves at a crazy fast pace, and each time someone falls you wonder if there will be someone there in time to catch them. And when they start climbing onto each others’ shoulders and heads, stacked three people high, and falling from such ridiculous heights, the audience collectively holds its breath, anticipating a tragedy that thankfully never comes.

But this was just the beginning of an astounding hour-long game of trust, an endless series of “holy crap!!” moments, each one more impressive than the last. At one point one of the guys solved a Rubik’s cube. Upside down. Balanced only on his head, on a tiny piece of wood at the top end of a stick, his feet in the air, starfish-like. At another point there was a high-speed back-flipping contest, and then there was the part where the audience threw hundreds of plastic balls at the performers as they stood on their hands. Other highlights included the drummer playing his body, a strip skipping session between three of the guys (each time one of them tripped up his skipping rope, he had to remove one of his three articles of clothing . . .), and the woman balanced upside down, her hands on wooden squares at the top of poles stuck into a wooden plaque on the ground, supporting her own body weight with one or both hands as she twisted and turned, upside down and sidewise, her body making a mockery of gravity.

But really the most salient parts of the hour-long performance were the times when the performers depended on each other for their lives. And I’m not exaggerating. These acrobats perform death-defying feats of physical prowess. How else to describe the intense vulnerability that comes with jumping directly on your colleagues’ ribs, or throwing your friends through the air, over and over, at high speed across the stage, relying on the precision and strength of those meant to catch them, or climbing into complicated positions on top of your fellow performers’ heads, chest, shoulders and knees, while moving in undulating formations across the stage. Indeed, what struck me most forcefully about this show was that despite, or really because of, their unparalleled strength and agility, these acrobats exposed the most profound vulnerability of being human: that you have to trust and depend on other people to keep yourself from stumbling to your death.

A must see.

<http://montrealrampage.com/montreal-completement-cirque-a-simple-spaces-gravity-and-other-myths-astounds-with-death-defying-feats-of-acrobatic-insanity/>

THEATRE CAT

LIBBY PURVES

13th June 2014

★★★★★

Beautiful bodies, joy in action

In circus tradition feats of acrobatic daring and balance are hyped up by a ringmaster – drumrolls, pleas to keep totally quiet lest you distract them, portentous announcements that this is the “first ever” attempt at a triple backflip or whatever. This Australian troupe of seven, called “Gravity and Other Myths” , do have drumrolls and sound. The musician occasionally joins them, not least for a super-speed strip skipping competition which leaves one member naked. But only one word is spoken, and not a boast uttered in this extraordinary hour.

Joyful as a romping basket of puppies, the five men and two women play, hurtle, leap, swing, climb and defy probability and sense. Their routines – well paced between breathtakingly fast and elegantly, balletically slow – span clowning, dance, and rumbustious party-tricks. For instance, as if a no-hands headstand (there are dozens) was not enough, one member solves a whole Rubik’s Cube while balancing on his head; others balance head-on-head, occasionally with a girl or two attached at some impossible angle to a bare foot; at one point they issue the audience with plastic balls to hurl at them while they adopt still more crazy balancing poses, and find hands to hurl them back. A few of the front row are recruited to lie on their backs while above them – and from nervous hand to hand – one of the young women beautifully balances and stretches, doing the aerial upside-down splits on one hand on a pole. With a smile.

But it is the ensemble grace of the troupe all together which captivated me most. They treat one another as gym equipment – trapezes, swings, skipping-ropes, vaulting horses; sometimes they find immense grace, sometimes merrily pile up their confreres in odd-shaped, ludicrous heaps and dance or spin on top of them. Or they toss one another up and down, create a towering arch of humanity, swing one another by leg-and-a-wing like toddlers.

The whole hour is a delight, and it is unsurprising that they won the physical-theatre palm at the Adelaide Fringe. But for all the subsequent brilliance my favourite memory is of the opening. All seven dash around, making sudden pyramids or handstands, but each suddenly snapping the one word of the evening in turn. “Falling!” – “Falling” . As each topples rigidly backwards as if in a trust exercise, or dives from a high perch on the shoulders of two others, he or she is deftly, affectionately caught by a companion. It is curiously moving. Beautiful. You leave with a lighter step.

<http://theatre.cat/tag/a-simple-space/>

2015

SCENE AND HEARD

JO LITSON

24th January 2015

The Sydney Festival has once again created a lively hub at Hyde Park North with its Festival Village set-up, which has been expanded this year to accommodate the crowds.

There are two Spiegel tents in place, with The Aurora home to two circus shows – A Simple Space and LIMBO – running through the Festival.

LIMBO is back after a sellout season at last year's Festival. It didn't feel quite so tightly paced on opening night as it did in 2014 but it's still a terrific, seductive show (see my review from last year).

A Simple Space by Adelaide-based company Gravity & Other Myths is a much more raw but thoroughly charming show. It features a company of seven acrobats – five men (Triton Tunis-Mitchell, Lachlan Binns, Martin Schreiber, Jacob Randell, Daniel Liddiard) and two women (Jascha Boyce and Rhiannon Cave-Walker) – along with a musician (Elliot Zoerner) who provides a driving percussion score and, at one point, steps into the limelight to become a human drum machine.

In terms of aesthetic, A Simple Space is certainly true to its title. It's circus at the other end of the spectrum from the slick, mega-produced spectacle of Cirque du Soleil. There's no set, minimal props and basic costuming (lads in jeans and T-shirts, ladies in white shorts and black tops). It's a decidedly glitz-free zone.

Sitting at such close quarters, we see the sweat and straining muscles, we hear the hard breathing, which all adds to the enjoyable homespun feel.

The vibe is rough-and-ready playful; the performers seem to be having as much fun as we are. They begin with a line-up along the back of the stage – to which they revert at the end of each act.

The show opens with something akin to a drama trust exercise in which they all move around the stage, yelling "falling" as one of them drops and is caught just before crashing – with a comic moment to cap it off.

There are all kinds of impressive balancing acts along with a very funny strip-skipping routine, balloon-moulding, a strong-woman act in which the two ladies each lift a man from the audience to see who can hold them up the longest, and a breath-holding contest.

One of the men solves a Rubik's Cube while standing on his head. (Someone should get him to duet with Hilary Cole, who solves a Rubik's Cube while singing in her cabaret show O.C. Diva).

The climax is a routine where the men toss the two women around, throwing them skywards while holding their hands and feet as if airing a blanket, and using them like human skipping ropes.

Overall, it does feel as if A Simple Space has one or two balancing acts too many (skillful though they are) but even so it's a really engaging show.

<http://jolitson.com/2015/01/24/a-simple-space/>

THE GUARDIAN

14th January 2015

MADHVI PANKHANIA

★★★

Seven expert acrobats from Australia's own Gravity & Other Myths company perform tricky routines, play cheeky games and manage impressive feats of teamwork, all within a simple square space and with hardly any props. There are plenty of over the top gags, though, in a circus performance as full of belly laughs as it is gymnastics.

The show opens with an enjoyable vitality: at frenetic pace, the performers move across the stage, shouting 'falling' before keeling over and being swept up again, just as they are about to faceplant the floor. The intimacy of the setting, played in the round, ups the thrill factor and helps to forge a warm camaraderie with the audience, who in turn cheer much more easily.

The scenes in the show regularly morph from traditional circus sequences to showy pantomime-like spectacle, where the audience is encouraged to delight in the misfortunes of the crew. The loser of a jovial skipping game is made to jump a final round clothed in very little. In another short sketch, two acrobat girls select men from the audience to see who can lift them the longest.

Sometimes, over-exaggeration and the demand for a crowd response make it hard to take the performance very seriously, which may be the point. Do the games display skill, or have they been created for show only – and do we really care who comes out top, anyway? Taken on face value, this is a great family show, full of easy humour, but there isn't much depth beyond the display.

The acrobatics really come to life towards the end of the show, when the choreography takes a more dangerous and original turn. Balancing on four hands, two women are inverted upside down, like a starfish in the air, again and again, before their bodies are used as human skipping ropes, knocking over a male colleague in the process. These moments are fabulous, but too few amid the hearty jokes to really keep you on the edge of your seat.

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jan/14/a-simple-space-review-belly-laughs-gymnastics>

THE CLOTHESLINE

CHARISSA MCCLUSKEY-GARCIA

14th Feb 2015

★★★★★

With awe and wonderment, today I witnessed six men and two women show complete fearlessness, complete and utter trust in their partner performers and strength and ability beyond belief.

A Simple Space is brought to life with amazing skill, delicate balancing, comic timing and just a little bit of cheek – especially depending on who can skip the longest.

From balloon animals, audience clapping in time and fun with balls, this performance will have you on the edge of your seat, literally. You will be clapping your hands over your eyes so as not to witness the possible fall of any of the performers who at some stage throughout the tumbling, somersaulting, climbing and jumping, find themselves at the top of a people totem pole which has got to be almost two-storeys-tall.

There is nothing I would change about this show, the devil may care approach to 'falling', the trust required of the audience when asked to literally hold a performer in their hands, or the so effective yet simple lighting.

I cannot recommend this show any more highly. You simply cannot afford to miss this show. Simply A-MAY-ZING!

<http://theclothesline.com.au/simple-space-fringe-review/>

GLAM ADELAIDE

ROD LEWIS

14th February 2015

One of Adelaide's own circus troupes, A Simple Space, have won the gong for best circus in the 2010 and 2014 Fringe Awards. It's a clear choice once you've seen them in action, not just for their skills but their staging.

As the name suggests, they use a simple space – a small bare stage with four short lighting poles, one in each corner, which they manually switch on and off for different lighting effects. The troupe use no tricks or loud music to add to the drama – they simply perform with some unobtrusive live instrumentation by one of the team to accompany them.

The most immediate impression, other than thinking of their impressive talents and flexibility, is that they bring a sense of fun to the proceedings. At all times, there's a feeling that we're simply watching a bunch of mates mucking about and enjoying themselves. That sense of fun permeates everything they do and is perhaps the most infectious 'it' factor of the show.

The other 'it' factor, of course, is what they do. From the opening Falling routine, to strip skipping, their supple bodies bend, flip, balance and lift. They create human pylons, walk and jump on each other, and throw each other around like ragdolls. While the basics of most stunts can be seen in any human circus, A Simple Space do what all good circuses do – they make it their own by making it feel fresh and exciting again.

A Simple Space is simply sensational and last year's hype is easily met again this year.

<http://www.glamadelaide.com.au/main/fringe-review-a-simple-space-2/>

RADIO ADELAIDE

SUE REECE

17th Feb 2015

I'm Sue Reece and I've been to see A Simple Space.

This is circus acrobatics at its most frenetic, and the first scenes resembled precision driving as the performance space was suddenly full of bodies interweaving around each other at high speed. This is a skilled performance, and suitable for all ages.

The capacity audience sat on tiered seats around the performance space, giving us all good views and closeness to the action.

Eschewing complex staging and effects, the performance was all about the human body and what it can be made to do. Simple lighting and simple staging require that the audience attention was focused only on the troupe.. who hold that attention effortlessly.

The choreography was based on the joy of performance and movement, directed and held together by live percussion.

It was fast paced, and full of energy and fun. Some acts were made to laugh at, others to admire ability, all to delight. Acts segued seamlessly from tongue in cheek, to complex acrobatics and back again.

The troupe were almost as stripped back as the stage, to the point of speed strip- skipping, yet it still retained a family friendly vibe.

A Simple Space, The Royal Croquet Club, Victoria Square. Check your Fringe Guide for details.

<https://radio.adelaide.edu.au/review-a-simple-space-by-sue-reece/>

16th Feb 2015

The space might be 'simple', but that's about it when it comes to this South Australian band of gymnastically superior performers. There's a live percussionist on a raised stage who matches the speed and intensity of the choreography, and the audience wraps around three sides of the black performance square. The show is intimate and in-your-face; there's audience participation and the performers make lots of eye contact – who doesn't love a 'he looked at me!' moment? There's even a ball-pit ball fight, which kids and adults alike revelled in. The eight performers are young, sexy and cheeky. It's clear that they all have a brilliant sense of humour from their on-stage exchanges, and most importantly, it's clear that they love what they do. As polished as the performance is in places, there's a gorgeous raw element to it as well; there's no spiffy lighting, no extravagant costumes and every now and then the performers make a mistake. It's incredibly refreshing to see young, vibrant personalities doing what they do, adorned with beaming smiles and an enthusiasm that pushes past the damaged pride of stuffing up to give it another go. It can be easy for these acrobatic/physical theatre shows to be repetitive, but this is so well segmented into sketches of varying speed, skill and attitude. The musical accompaniment complements the drama and excitement, and the lack of exuberant attention to detail with the costumes and lighting places the emphasis on the sheer skill of the performers. Totally family-friendly (with some man torso action for the ladies) and in a top spot, this one is a must-see!

<http://aspiremagazine.com.au/2015/adelaide-fringe-review-a-simple-space/>

RADIO ADELAIDE

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This is circus acrobatics at its most frenetic, and the first scenes resembled precision driving as the performance space was suddenly full of bodies interweaving around each other at high speed. This is a skilled performance, and suitable for all ages.

The capacity audience sat on tiered seats around the performance space, giving us all good views and closeness to the action.

Eschewing complex staging and effects, the performance was all about the human body and what it can be made to do. Simple lighting and simple staging require that the audience attention was focused only on the troupe.. who hold that attention effortlessly.

The choreography was based on the joy of performance and movement, directed and held together by live percussion.

It was fast paced, and full of energy and fun. Some acts were made to laugh at, others to admire ability, all to delight. Acts segued seamlessly from tongue in cheek, to complex acrobatics and back again.

The troupe were almost as stripped back as the stage, to the point of speed strip- skipping, yet it still retained a family friendly vibe.

A Simple Space, The Royal Croquet Club, Victoria Square. Check your Fringe Guide for details.

<https://radio.adelaide.edu.au/review-a-simple-space-by-sue-reece/>

RIP IT UP

EMMYLOU MACDONALD

15th Feb 2015

★★★★★

Having tumbled around the world and back again, Adelaide's sprightly eight-piece Gravity & Other Myths are back with an astonishing display of raw strength and vivid talent: A Simple Space.

The troupe's unyielding sense of loyalty drives the show, followed closely by its humble energy and intimate atmosphere. Close-quarter seating connects the performers and audience alike, forming a swift yet dynamic relationship of jaw-dropping awe, wide-eyed dread and deep sighs of relief.

Through a continuous set of airborne flips and floor-bound dips, the group showcases its collective energy in the most honest way possible. Organic teamwork and remarkable fluidity form an effortless façade, while pouring sweat and sharp facial expressions reveal the true extent of their demanding romp.

Hints of cheeky humour contrast the show's daring feats, creating a playful ambience in a fast-paced room. Momentary glimpses of on-stage rivalry add to the mischievous vibes, forming a comical and captivating performance from beginning to end.

A Simple Space continues at The Menagerie, Royal Croquet Club until Sunday, March 15.

<http://ripitup.com.au/festivals/review-adelaide-circus-simple-space-gravity-other-myths/>

ADELAIDE NOW

LAUREN NOVAK

16th February 2015

★★★★1/2

A Simple Space describes the stripped-back venue for this jaw-dropping display of physical theatre but there is nothing simple about the feats these eight fearless acrobats pull off.

In a game of human Twister, Gravity & Other Myths roll, climb, leap, fall and fling themselves across the stage — and each other — with complete trust and precision team work.

Lithe and nimble, these guys and girls will make you want to get to a yoga class pronto.

Their impressive muscle control makes exhausting moves look easy and the action is non-stop.

A cheeky competitive streak drives the performers to better each other, inspiring a hilarious 'strip skipping' skit and a freakish Rubik's cube feat.

A few obvious fumbles were all that stood between this group and perfection.

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/entertainment/adelaide-fringe/other-events/adelaide-fringe-review-2015-a-simple-space/news-story/4c65e54065ca1b9a6cf7a6747366487f>

AUSSIE THEATRE

PAIGE MULHOLLAND

17th February 2015

Gravity and Other Myths perform A Simple Space with such informality and good humour, even in the face of huge risks, you could be forgiven for thinking you'd just walked in on a group of reckless kids messing around in a backyard. That said, they'd have to be some pretty darn talented kids.

Home-grown circus troupe 'Gravity and Other Myths' return to Adelaide after a critically-acclaimed international tour with A Simple Space – a mix of acrobatics, traditional circus sideshows like balloon animal creation, larkish dares and challenges, and what can only be described as the world's most psychotic form of dodgeball (the audience hurls plastic balls at the performers until they either fall out of their handstands or suffer some kind of internal damage, or both). Despite the eclectic mix and the novelty factor of many of their acts, the troupe are true to their name; they keep it clean and simple.

With only a small floor for the acrobats, a platform for the percussionist, a few Ikea-style lights that are operated by the performers and the occasional prop, the stage is kept clear and modest. While the show is undeniably circus-based, this minimalist set makes it clear that you shouldn't expect elephants and clowns, although there's plenty of clowning around.

The tricks and challenges enacted in A Simple Space will keep everyone on the edge, especially the performers. The fact that quite a few of the stunts fell on opening night had its pros and cons; on one hand, it's always unfortunate to see someone fall in a show, but on the other, knowing that the stunts can and do go wrong builds suspense like nothing else can. If something can go wrong midway through the show, why not in the finale, where pooped performers are swinging each other like skipping ropes, mere inches from the next swinging pair? Luckily the finale, as well as most of the other routines, were performed without a collision or a fall despite a few close calls.

The troupe are truly jacks-of-all-trades, and this is what makes the show so special. It's not just acrobatics, it's not just balloons, it's not just a man solving a Rubik's Cube while balancing on his head – it's all these things and more. With audience participation that, for once, won't make you cringe and demonstrations of everything you've ever told a child not to try at home, A Simple Space definitely deserves a 'space' in your Fringe calendar.

<http://aussietheatre.com.au/reviews/adelaide-fringe-simple-space#.VOqZMPmUfg0>

FRESH 92.7

ANH NGO

27th February 2015

How many ways are there to solve a Rubik's Cube?

WRONG!

However many ways you counted – add one more to it. Curious? You'll find out in this show.

This deceptively-titled display of vertically-challenging, mind-bending, gravity-defying acrobatics is *anything* but simple. Showcasing seven of South Australia's most talented young performers, (as well as one incredible drummer), this show transcended all the expectations I initially had upon entering the "Menagerie" tent (which were high mind you, considering this show has not received anything but 5 star reviews).

The extraordinary tricks, tumbles, leaps, throws and jumps made the audience forget, for just that split second, that every single amazing thing unfolding in front of their eyes was in fact, being undertaken by a *human* being!

Much of the show focused on heads – whether it was having their heads used as stepping stones by their fellow team mates, or experiencing a rush of blood to the head with their countless handstands, headstands, and head spins, this dizzying array of established athleticism had the audience in constant awe.

But the appeal of this show stemmed not only from the unbelievable skill of the performers, but their relatability, humanity, and humour; it was highly evident that they all enjoyed bringing us the show, as much as we enjoyed experiencing it.

So what can you do with a couple of lights, a handful of colourful balls, and a simple space? A helluva lot, that's what.

<http://fresh927.com.au/fringe-review-simple-space/>

FRINGE REVIEW

MARK WICKETT

1st March 2015

Low Down

An utterly brilliant display of physical agility, strength and precision, from a tight group of performers whose bounces, balances and backflips drop jaws, take breath and make us roar with delight.

Review

It's as if you're relaxing at a barbecue on a weekend afternoon: it's too hot to do much more than sit and watch, and here are these eight friends larking about in front of you. They're falling and catching and jumping and throwing – not balls, not clubs: each other – and you don't know where to look in their freneticism.

Someone is always vying for the longest or fastest, and if a blur of motion isn't the winner, it's the one doing it upside down. Yet there remains complete teamwork – when the 40 degree heat makes their hands a little sweaty, the occasional slip is backed up by two or three of the others. These people are having a great time together – and we're along for the ride.

The team not only engage us, the audience, but involve us in their acrobatics – cheeky, knowing looks at you as they're about to jump, or them leaving their platform to come out into where we're sitting on the edge of our seats. The occasional “no way” from the woman behind me started as a whisper, but she got louder, and more frequent, with the truly amazing gravity defying acts that these people make look so easy.

The title of this show is apt only in the description of where this group performs – a square, surrounded on three sides by the captivated audience, the fourth being a raised stage for the percussionist, who throughout the acrobatics of the other seven, plays the beats live (mostly on his drum kit, sometimes equally great on his body). The lighting is simple – a member of the team will push a button to change it subtly, but only to focus on where the action is: on the ground, up high, up really high. The space is indeed simple, but what these eight supremely talented people do with it is a breathtaking spectacle and enormous fun.

I'm going again.

<http://fringereview.co.uk/review/adelaide-fringe/2015/a-simple-space/>

LAST MINUTE THEATRE TICKETS

DICKIE NEIL

24th April 2015

★★★★★

How long can you hold your breath for? How many back flips can you do in one go? Can you stand on your head? Or.....Could you stand on somebody elses?

My dear readers, I can hear you saying, to yourselves or indeed, to somebody adjacent to you that I've finally flipped and started asking random questions but no, you are mistaken. These questions make up the tagline for A Simple Space at The Udderbelly.

For the uninitiated amongst you, (you are forgiven!) The Udderbelly is a giant, Up-turned purple cow. Not a real one, you understand but a circus tent come theatre come performance space that sits proudly on the Southbank from 9th of April until 19th of July 2015.

A Simple Space is a show that inhabits the aforementioned space from 21st of April up until 24th of May. It is an acrobatic circus show unlike any that you may have seen before. Unlike others (not mentioning any French inspired Cirque themed shows) there is little glitz. There are no be-feathered head-dresses. No mawkish make-up. There is a simple platform that, quite honestly looked like no bigger square footage than my back bedroom. On each corner there are poles on which are secured the stage lights. I say stage lights, there are no giant par cans (theatre parlance.....Google it!) No blinding Super Troopers (again, Google!) in fact it could be said that I have had more dazzling light displays on my Christmas tree than there is on this stage but, it's not needed here. What we are about to be dazzled by is the sheer skill, dexterity and, at times seemingly impossible feats that are happening in front of our very eyes.

Gravity & Other Myths are one of Australia's hottest young circus ensembles (in more ways than one, I can tell you!) I am going to attempt a name check here but as I couldn't find a printed cast list I spoke to one of the guys after the show, Dan Liddiard to get the names, and between us we may have some miss-spellings. To the cast, I apologise in advance if I make any mistakes here but I think maybe that you should point any accusatory fingers in Dan's direction. I think he wants the spotlight. Watch that one!

Anyway, here goes. In addition to Mr Liddiard (see, 3 mentions already!) the troupe consists of Lachye Binns, Rhianna Cave-Walker (her real name..... Obviously her path was mapped out at an early age!) Jacob Randell, Marty Schreiber, Triton Michel, Jascha Boyce and Simon Mclure. They are incredible. They mix acrobatics with contemporary dance and comedy set to a modernistic soundscape that is also performed live on stage (with the aide of computers).

Right from the start, the energy is pumping. This is helped along nicely when three of the really rather handsome men engage in a skipping competition. Now, to many this may sound like a rather flat, indeed even lame way to start a show. You couldn't be many more bus stops away from the truth. This is no school girl skipping. It is high octane, fast paced, manly skipping. And, if mistakes are made then an item of clothing has to be removed..... it is at this point that I must interject. Regular readers will be aware that I usually have a companion with me when I pop out on my little theatrical sojourns. The man of few words, Mr Smith. Tonight was no different apart from the fact that I couldn't shut him up this time. To be brutally honest I think he may be getting a little above his station now and, quite frankly people are beginning to talk about our relationship but that's my cross to bare and nothing for you to lose precious sleep over. Any road up, by this point he is fanning himself furiously with what I hope wasn't an undergarment and I did think we would need St Johns on standby just in case. The "competition" draws to a close when one of the fine specimens is naked. Being a family friendly show there is no male genitalia on show. The denuded Adonis uses his hands (yes BOTH!) to spare his chagrin.

What follows is a full hour of heart stopping somersaults. Balancing and climbing. Tossing and launching each other across the stage. Using their fellow performers as climbing frames and generally doing things those most mere humans would balk at the thought of doing. All of this takes place without any safety nets, wires or crash mats. Imagine, if you will standing atop another human being. In fact look to the person nearest you right now and try to think what it would be like to be perched precariously upon their shoulders, then add another person to that teetering stack. All under the gaze of an audience whom, in some part I'm sure are waiting for a fall. I don't know about you but it makes me want to lie down in a darkened room with a cup of sweet tea and compose myself.

At one point our funambulists (you are going to be busy googling, aren't you!) start dousing their heads with what one assumes is chalk (although the ever so chirpy Mr "who let the budgie out the cage" Smith harked back to the days of Yardley Sandalwood at this stage whilst I beckoned the paramedics) and then proceed to defy equilibrium by walking around the dais with another individual on their heads. It's madness I tell you. All this and human percussion instruments and a brief period of balls in your face! (not as dirty as it sounds but you'll have to go and see it to find out what it means!)

In conclusion, a spectacular show is comprised of pure, unadulterated talent. The hours of practice that has gone into this work is evident and I'm sure there must have been a fair amount of injuries along the way too. And to quote my companion "it's been a while since so many men made me gasp!" You have a few weeks left to grab yourselves a ticket so get down to the big purple cow and see some great entertainment.

<http://www.lastminutetheatretickets.com/londonwestend/review-of-a-simple-space-at-the-udderbelly-festival-southbank-centre/>

24th April 2015

★★★★★

One of the things about living in London is how often something is on that you never get around to seeing. For example, the Udderbelly Festival has been running on the South Bank since 2009 and until yesterday, I had only ever passed by the site on my way to the West End. So, when I was asked to review a show at the festival I thought ‘why not?’ However, as someone that is really not keen on circuses, when I was told the show I was going to see was circus ensemble Gravity and Other Myths show “A Simple Space” I wasn’t really that enthusiastic. An hour of, what the programme calls, ‘non-stop, mind-boggling feats of breathtaking acrobatics.’ really didn’t sound like my cup of tea at all.

Obviously, as so often happens in these cases, I was completely wrong, and had a thoroughly wonderful time watching as this seven strong team of young Australians (Triton Tunis-Mitchell, Lachlan Binns, Martin Schreiber, Jacob Randell, Rhiannon Cave-Walker, Daniel Liddiard and Simon McClure) demonstrated their mastery of the acrobatic craft in ways I have never encountered before. “A Simple Space” really does what it says on the tin. When you enter the big purple cow, all you have is a stage with some lights fixed on poles at each side. Once the team enter, they manipulate the lights themselves to illuminate each segment of the show, starting from what I was reliably informed was a standard of drama lessons ‘Falling’ building the show up through some amazing feats of acrobatic skill to a truly breathtaking finale. There was a lot of humour along the way as the team tested themselves and each other in games of skill and stamina – how long can you hold your breath for? Not long enough – and there was some very active and enthusiastic audience participation in a segment that involved headstands and spherical objects flying through the air. Elliot Zoerner’s musical accompaniment was spot on and worked superbly with every aspect of the show, adding to the atmosphere of, not to put to fine a point on it, mind-blowing awesomeness,

I really don’t want to give too much away about this masterpiece of a show but various moments really stick out in my mind, such as the skipping competition with everything to play for, and there was the Rubik’s Cube. I have never been able to master one of these things, but I watched a man complete it in the most amazing way possible – and I wasn’t jealous of him at all, honest. The longer I watched the show, the more I started seeing the similarities to ballet or other forms of contemporary dance. Meticulously choreographed, and involving total trust between each member of a team that really seemed at times to move and think as one. The two art forms, dance and acrobatics have much in common with each other.

From where I was sat, it was obvious everyone on the stage was having the time of their lives and really threw themselves into to the competitive elements of the show, congratulating the winner and helping each other continually – in one case going beyond above and beyond the call of duty to save an innocent man’s blushes. At the end, an hour had gone by unnoticed as I sat spellbound, either with my heart in my mouth or clapping wildly, and as the crowd rose to give Gravity and Other Myths a well deserved standing ovation, I was up there with them wishing I had paid just that little bit more attention in Gym class.

On until late May, “A Simple Space” was a wonderful introduction to the Udderbelly Festival for me, and next time I’m around the South Bank I will definitely be popping in to enjoy the ambience of the festival area – where there are some great places to eat and drink – and maybe take another glimpse into the interior of the big purple cow once more.

<https://www.londontheatre1.com/news/106076/review-a-simple-space-the-udderbelly-festival/>

26th April 2015

★★★★★

The big purple cow is back on the south bank, and seeing those heliotrope bovine mammaries saluting the sunshine can only mean one thing. The Udderbelly Festival is here, and it's heralding the start of summer. Kicking off our coverage of the festival in style, is Aussie acrobatic ensemble Gravity and Other Myths, presenting a breathtaking show of strength, agility and collaboration: A Simple Space.

Flipping, jumping, balancing, falling and climbing, A Simple Space tests the limits of what's possible for a group of humans to do with their bodies, in what's less a series of impressive stunts than an elegantly composed performance, *incorporating* a series impressive stunts. Avoiding the too-common pitfall of labouring any one act, the show hits high after high, flowing seamlessly between them thanks to the personalities of the performers that – somehow – come across on stage.

As they step away from the glossy leotards and wacky face paint that we're used to seeing in acrobatic circus shows, Gravity and Other Myths give us sweaty bodies and strained expressions, raw and authentic as they wow time and time again. This almost gritty presentation is exactly what makes A Simple Space feel so exciting; seeing the performers as real people who are competitive, fallible, and impossibly strong and agile, a team with real spirit that imposes forfeits for the first to fall, pushing each other harder and harder and onto more astounding feats.

But as a show it's also funny. Not a jaded, Cirque du Soleil style, "time for a clown to come on stage and pull some faces" kind of funny, but a genuine laugh-out-loud self-deprecating funny, that includes you in the joke rather than being an audience to it.

On the point of entertainment value, it would be fair to say that if watching gymnastics, just to see Louis Smith do his thing, is your bag, A Simple Space doesn't so much bring that bag as bring a whole plane load of suitcases. Incredible physiques ripped with functional muscle, flinging each other around, balancing, counterbalancing, holding and falling, the men and woman aren't overtly sexualised despite being at the pinnacle of physical fitness – though there is definitely something animalistic about all the sweat, groaning and panting that's never hidden or disguised.

Boasting integrity, authenticity and a whole lot of humour, it's the raw physicality of its performers that grabs the headlines. With next to no props, simple lighting and the smallest of stages to work within, the people are hypnotising, their relationships infinitely watchable, and their talent breathtaking. Relentlessly entertaining from start to finish, A Simple Space is an intense hour of real jeopardy that'll leave your mind in a spin, heart pounding and face smiling. Besides, what's not to love about watching someone solve a Rubik's cube standing only on their head?

<http://gingerhibiscus.com/review-a-simple-space-at-the-udderbelly-festival/>

GRUMPY GAY CRITIC

J WAYGOOD

28th April 2015

★★★★★

In a Nutshell

Dangerous and literally unbelievable, Aussie circus Gods Gravity & Other Myths' *A Simple Space* is nothing short of mesmerising impossibility!

Overview

Aussie circus troupe, Gravity & Other Myths, bring last year's smash-hit show, *A Simple Space*, back to London's Underbelly Festival for one final fling, igniting a trio of circus acts headlining the festival.

Concept

A Simple Space's concept lives up to its name. There is no set, scant props, and minimal lighting. The idea behind *A Simple Space* and Gravity & Other Myths' approach to the show is to really strip things back to the very basics, removing the performance far away from traditional circus and theatrical devices as possible. It gives the audience a chance to watch the show unhindered and without distraction, with their focus squarely on the physical action.

Despite *A Simple Space* being a very sparse affair, it by no means means that the show is void of interest. As well as some outlandishly implausible sequences, there are some wonderful little interludes that break up the otherwise breakneck octane. These little reprieves, as well as giving both the performers and the audience a chance to catch their breaths, add a sense of character on top of the humour and charisma that already comes through in the main segments. They all take place as little competitions, such as how long you can hold your breath, how many back-flips you can do in quick succession without falling over, and even a game of strip-skipping! It adds a real sense of personality and rapport between you and the performers. They might be performing impossible feats, but they're still very personable people, and it really adds to *A Simple Space's* sense of fun and energy.

Direction & Production

Given that the whole point of the show is that there's almost zero production values means that this is going to be a short section! However, much like *Bare Essentials'* approach to new short playwriting, *A Simple Space* is actually enhanced by the Spartan approach, because you can't really focus on anything but the action. In saying that, the acrobatic skills on show are so powerful and astonishing enough that even with all the production values that could be thrown at it, it would be very difficult to do anything but fix an enthralled gaze upon the performers. The simple approach makes the entire show feel pure, visceral, and real.

The live music/percussion provided by one of the troupe moves things along nicely, and also has the flexibility of making sure the music stays in time and follows the performance and performers. Even though it's a lot of mixed electronic sounds and samples, it still has the feel that it's immediate and alive in just how it moulds itself and responds to what's going on around it.

Performance

I'll admit that, whilst I enjoy circus, I wasn't really expecting much new from *A Simple Space*. It's was more a case of familiarity than prejudice. However, *A Simple Space* was anything but comfortably recognisable. The feats that Gravity & Other Myths perform are really pushing the possibilities of what acrobatic circus can actually achieve.

The stunts in *A Simple Space* are downright dangerous and literally nail-biting. Many of them, especially how they use their own bodies against their fellow-performers, look like some new cruel and unusual form of Aussie torture than innocuous circus folly. Audience members were literally gasping, and some even screaming, at some of the things they were doing on stage. There is a fresh sense of intense caprice and originality in everything they do, and because of this, *A Simple Space* is completely unpredictable and surprising. You'll never have seen anything like this, and quite likely, won't see acts like these replicated with ease anywhere else or with as much unbridled panache.

You get the sense of how boundary-pushing and difficult the performances are in the fact that the performers don't always pull the stunts off, especially leaps and balances, first time around. They fail, and do so more than once. However, they always achieved what they were supposed to in at least the second attempt. But it goes to show that, despite the imagination and the intricate nature of what they've devised, it's no walk in the park. Even for these circus Gods, the show is as challenging for them as it is mind-boggling to watch.

Lastly, despite the exertion and the effort, Gravity & Other Myths never stop having fun, even if they are literally dripping with sweat and grimacing from the monumental strain they put their bodies through. Because of this, *A Simple Space* is an infectious marvel, even if it's shockingly unnerving at the same time!

Verdict

The devil must have had a very profitable week purchasing the souls from these eight super-humans! *A Simple Space* is an adrenaline-pumping spectacular that will completely exploded everything you thought you knew or expected about circus.

<http://grumpygaycritic.co.uk/2015/04/circus-review-a-simple-space/>

REVSTAN REVIEW

28th April 2015

To call A Simple Space an acrobatics show doesn't really do it justice: For sixty minutes I was smiling and agog.

This Australian troop of five men and two women perform a series of spectacular feats some of which you have to see to believe.

Most of it is done without props, using each other for strength, guidance and balance. They fling each other about, are human climbing frames and a shoulder, head, face, foot or hand can all be a useful platform on which to balance. They even jump on each other, sometimes playing a sophisticated and graceful game of moving around without touching the floor.

It is done with a certain amount of humour and playful competitiveness. In between the more physical feats they have little competitions. There's one to see who can hold their breath the longest while one of them stays in a handstand and another which is a bit like strip poker only they compete at skipping rather than cards.

There is some audience participation. If you are sitting on the front row you may get pulled onto the stage but don't worry it's an easy task and you will get a unique view of that piece of the performance.

The audience is also invited to play a game of human ten-pin bowling with rather a lot of plastic balls one of which I accidentally brought home with me - I'm sure they won't miss it.

When they do stumble or slip, and there were only a couple during the show, it doesn't matter because what they are doing is so breathtaking in its strength and precision you wonder there aren't more.

I challenge anyone to sit through A Simple Space and not be even a little bit amazed and a little bit in awe. I left wishing I'd done gymnastics at school or gone to circus school.

<http://theatre.revstan.com/2015/04/udderbelly-review-spectacular-strength-and-agility-in-a-simple-space-.html>

SARAH JEFFCOATE

29th April 2015

★★★★★

Part of Udderbelly Circus Season 2015, *A Simple Space* is the first of three acts to perform in the iconic purple cow. With electrifying stunts and a super-charged atmosphere, the next two shows certainly have a lot to live up to. After performing to delighted audiences last summer, the award-winning Australian ensemble Gravity & Other Myths have returned to Udderbelly Festival for a second time, and I would urge you to visit the Southbank Centre before this fantastic circus act departs London for another year.

The show starts off small, with the performers darting around the stage, throwing themselves trustingly towards the floor to cries of “falling”, only to be scooped up in the nick of time (or left to fall flat on their faces) by their talented teammates. However, they soon build to a crescendo of jaw-dropping stunts, with members being tossed around at alarming speed, and climbing each other to exhibit various terrifying balancing acts, including a human totem pole which had me on the edge of my seat.

Interspersed with playful competitions, like a hearty game of strip skipping (one for the ladies), and a comical breath-holding contest, the performance felt wonderfully raw. Most Cirque du Soleil style acts make it seem so effortless, but the real magic of this performance is that the troupe does nothing to mask the physical exertion required for such impressive acrobatics. It's also plain to see that they're having the time of their lives performing, and that feeling is certainly infectious. Their vitality and electric chemistry seeped into the audience, who were holding their breath and clutching their sides throughout. The camaraderie that permeates the show made it impossible to leave without feeling elated.

Not to distract from the fabulous feats, the space itself certainly is simple. A raised platform acts as a stage, surrounded on three sides by tiered seating, as well as some chairs at ground level. My sole complaint is that from where I sat – a couple of rows back in the floor space – it was difficult to see the lower level stunts clearly, so I would find a spot in the staggered areas if I were you. The low key lighting controlled by the acrobats themselves adding to the intimacy of the piece. A dynamic soundtrack was provided by a live musician who also got his fair share of stage time, and held the audience rapt in his hands whilst the other members of the company caught their breath. The whole act felt perfectly paced and wonderfully exhilarating, and the hour long duration flew by in what seemed like minutes, always a sign that you're having fun!

An anticipated summer fixture in any Londoner's calendar, Udderbelly Festival is the perfect place to wind down now that the evenings are warming up. It's safe to say that the chilled ambiance and friendly buzz that fills the festival is perfectly suited to the incredible performance that has found a home there for the coming weeks. So take a trip to marvel at this awe-inspiring headline show while you still can. I, for one, can't think of a more exciting way to while away a spring evening.

<http://everything-theatre.co.uk/2015/04/a-simple-space-southbank-centre-review.html>

LONDON CITY NIGHTS

30th April 2015

Most people dread getting dragged up on stage during a performance. Not me. Sure it's scary in that "I hope my flies aren't undone" sort of way, but not once have I ever regretted sitting on the front row. That said, I had some serious misgivings when a smiling performer extended his hand and hoisted me up onto the gym mat. A couple of minutes later I was lying flat on my back with an acrobat balanced on my outstretched palms.

The experience cut to the heart of A Simple Space. Being inches below a woman standing on her palms, an intense gaze burning a hole in the stage, veins wrapped around her muscles like steel cables and beads of sweat mazing their way down her face cements the effort, concentration and toll that these gymnastics take.

Composed of seven young acrobats from Australian company Gravity & Other Myths, the show makes an austere first impression. The set is a square mat with a couple of lights at each corner and the performers are clad in khaki and pastel tops, creating an effect not unlike being trapped in a GAP advert. We soon realise that everything that's not vital to the performance has been stripped away- the company even do their own lighting cues live on stage.

Minimalist it may be, but the aesthetic heightens the many feats we see before us. These range from human sculptures that bristle with limbs, to performers balancing in shaky human towers, being whirled around the stage by their wrists, leaping onto each other's backs or being gracefully tossed in parabolic arcs towards each other. This is standard acrobatics fare, but it's still thrilling as all hell. There's something adrenaline inducing in watching someone plummet towards the ground, only to be caught at the last moment and bounce up smiling, or the wobbly intensity of a man balancing three people on his head.

There's a bedrock of skill here that all but guarantees A Simple Space will entertain, but what's most interesting is where they deviate from expectations. The classical acrobat show is all tassled outfits, vaseline smiles, safety nets, circus lighting and glitter, shooting for the goal of showing the performer as an effortlessly graceful automaton, an image that this company are keen to subvert.

They achieve it by emphasising anatomical and emotional effort. Key to this is the obvious fatigue; the performers going red in the face as their muscles shiver n' shake under the strain. All this is accompanied by a symphony of grunts, groans and moans - leaving us in no doubt as to the effort going into every motion. Another deviation from the norm is baking in elements of failure. Many of the acts are competitions between the company - the most eye-catching a backflip contest. Stood in a row, they take turns backflipping to a rhythmic beat, eliminating a person when they fall to the group.

Paradoxically, the constant sight of failure makes the show that much more impressive. It drums into us the effort, training and skill needed to do even the simplest gymnastic action, as well as allowing us to empathise with what's going on before our eyes. It all feels extremely modern - the scuffed knees and bleeding feet in perfect sync with a contemporary YouTube/Vine fails orientated audience.

As far as an hour's entertainment on the South Bank goes it's totally worthwhile. Sure, there's not a huge amount of depth to it - but then you don't go to an acrobatic show expecting a life changing emotional experience. For what it is, it's superb; a thousand thumps, gasps and smiles combining into a straight-up fun tapestry of tumbling.

<http://www.londoncitynights.com/2015/04/a-simple-space-at-udderbelly.html>

THIS IS CABARET

ED GOSLING

1st May 2015

★★★★

The Udderbelly kicks off a season of circus with a highly competitive show.

A Simple Space sees a striped down minimalist set in which Gravity And Other Myths' seven acrobats explore the potential of the human body in a fun, competitive – and chiefly playful and down to earth way. This is a circus that prizes style over substance even if the plain coloured t-shirts and beige trousers do make it feel aesthetically somewhat like watching a sustained hour long gap advert from the nineties.

Circus is about pushing yourself to the limit, and reaching a goal more often than not creates several more goals. It is a never ending journey where you cannot really be satisfied where you are, a little like Freud's theory of desire, although (in the case of juggling) with more, well, balls.

Most shows see a cast working together with the audience led to believe that they support each other wholeheartedly and are all part of one big happy family. A Simple Space has a very different approach and sees the cast trying to relentlessly outdo each other in feats of impressiveness. At one point this manifests itself in a backflipping competition, where individuals are knocked out if they fail to land the trick perfectly; the final round sees the last two performers completing around twenty backflips in a row. At another they hold handstands while the audience throws different coloured ball pit balls at them to make it harder.

This spirit of pushing themselves feels constant and for a number of the big set pieces the cast act as spotters for each other. The spirit to be the best possible is relentless: when a trick is missed, it is not glossed over but performed again until success ensues. While the choreography is tight and the positions are clearly well rehearsed, this feels like a show that is taking risks and reminds us that high level circus is always comes with risks. The toll of achieving this level of physical control is also vividly apparent: the troupe's t-shirts look clearly less fresh towards the end and they are left breathing heavily after some of the scenes.

It is hard to make a joke out of acrobatics, but there are is some good comedy here. A strip-skipping competition elicits loud rounds of laughter, as do many other moments of the show. By taking out narrative, dialogue or the other common theatrical devices, we are left with what feels like a very innocent platform to try new things. The bright colours of various props, and the reference to several toys make it feel like a childhood nursery at times, if instead of bumbling around haplessly, knocking things over and shitting on themselves children were able to artistically redefine what it is to be human.

The music is performed live on-stage by Elliot Zoerner, who mixes samples with percussion. This perfect marriage of sounds with the action allows him to react to the performance by adding in an extra few bars if some element needs repeating, or building in a crescendo to add emphasis. One section sees him at the forefront of the show for an extended body percussion section that really is the musical equivalent of circus. Zoerner's contributions are highlight of the show and his work helps give the otherwise disparate elements a cohesiveness that draws it all together.

A Simple Space is an incredibly fun show. There is evidence everywhere that it has been skilfully put together, with enough big moments to leave you feeling uplifted.

<http://www.thisiscabaret.com/review-simple-space-udderbelly/>

THE BUBBLE

VICTORIA LAMPARD

8th May 2015

BUENOS AIRES' 2015 CIRCUS FESTIVAL OPENS WITH LITERALLY THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

The words 'unmissable' and 'mesmerising' are bandied around a lot in performance reviews. Which frustratingly- but perhaps appropriately- means there are no words left to describe pieces like 'A Simple Space', the award-winning new show on its global tour with the Australian 8-man company Gravity & Other Myths (GOM), which last night inaugurated Buenos Aires' 'Polo Circo' circus festival.

The group create a stripped-back game-space and, in chinos and cotton T's, do away with all the worn-out circus stereotypes in a perfectly paced hour of contortion and acrobatics, in which off-hand mini-games blend into stupendous feats of acrobatics so fluidly you can't process, you can only absorb. Imagine the casual grace of parkour, the charisma of your favorite buddy, and the uncanny satisfaction of witnessing different bodies functioning as one synchronised unit. What you're imagining is the level one to GOM's level 10.

Its lack of showman conceit leaves space for it to be genuinely funny: It's like you've walked through star-spangled drapes into the big top and ended up dropping in on your acrobat friends' down-time BBQ, accompanied by live music somewhere between a freewheeling circus-spiced Bonobo and the more aqueous depths of Jamie XX. It's the gymnastic equivalent of a jam-session of musical greats, with a rubix cube, forfeits, and some light stripping thrown in for good measure.

'A Simple Space', where an amiable euphoria of game-play and synchrony belies the company's physical and aesthetic mastery, is on at the Polo Circo until Sunday.

It really is the greatest show on earth. Its charm is that it would never, ever, admit it.

<http://www.bubblear.com/buenos-aires-2015-circus-festival-opens-with-literally-the-greatest-show-on-earth/>

THE PRESS NZ

CHARLIE GATES

10 September 2015

I don't think I have been to many shows where I have spontaneously whooped.

A Simple Space is the kind of show where the acrobatic stunts are so astonishing that you can't really control your reaction. And I wasn't alone. The audience were there with me, whooping and gasping with each new turn of skill.

David Walker

Australian acrobatic show *A Simple Space* opened at the Christchurch Arts Festival on Wednesday night.

Australian ensemble Gravity & Other Myths have stripped the false pomp and bombast from traditional acrobatics to create something fresh and exciting. The eight performers, including a live drummer, bring a young, friendly and casual feel to the performance.

There is a genuine feeling of camaraderie among the performers as they laugh and smile with each other between stunts.

And there is a playfulness to their routines that makes them feel like those childhood games that slowly escalated into greater and greater acts of daring. But, unlike childhood, these games do not end in tears, but smiles and applause from the audience.

But the show's playful tone and patina of hipster stylings are incidental, the main attraction here is a series of genuinely dazzling acrobatic feats. The performers stand three high on each other's heads, tumble into each other's arms and form human staircases for each other to climb.

At one point, this reviewer was dragged on stage with half a dozen others for a bit of audience participation. We all lay on our backs in a circle with our heads pointing towards the middle while a woman did handstands on poles above us. It was a strange sensation to look up from the ground at someone doing a handstand above you. It felt like sitting at the edge of a deep swimming pool and watching someone swim up towards you.

But these extraordinary acts of poise and grace were not treated with any pretension. The stunts may require years of training and focus, but they are rattled off brightly and quickly. Unlike the grave and suspenseful tone of traditional circus acrobatics, this is a witty, playful and fast-paced celebration of the human body.

It is a celebration that feels perfectly suited to a family audience. The child next to me in the audience was on his feet in rapt fascination for much of the show.

The unpretentious staging also helps the fresh feel of this show. The audience is on three sides, while the performers operate the simple lighting on stands at each corner of the square performance space. The live drummer also makes the performance feel more dynamic and organic.

It all contributes to the feeling that this is a funky and dynamic performance.

This is a perfectly pitched one hour festival show that won a well deserved standing ovation at the finale.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/71907305/Review-A-Simple-Space>

THEATRE REVIEW

IAN LOCHHEAD

10th September 2015

Imagine standing on your head – on a block of wood about 10 centimetres square – suspended on a steel rod about half a metre above the floor – while you move your arms and legs through the air – and then you are handed a Rubik's cube, which you have to complete before you can return to your upright position. Physical agility competing with mental agility, or just a plain nightmare? In fact, this is a routine from *A Simple Space*, performed by Daniel Liddiard of Gravity and Other Myths, the Australian acrobatics ensemble currently appearing at the Christchurch Arts Festival. This sequence is one of the quieter moments in a non-stop performance that leaves the audience breathless yet exhilarated at the conclusion of the hour-long show.

The show's title comes from the premise of stripping the performance of everything inessential and bringing the audience as close to the performance space as possible. There are no spangled tights, just t-shirts and three quarter pants for the five men, shorts and black tops for the two women. Lighting comes from standards at the four corners of the space and is switched on and off by members of the troupe. Live music is provided by percussionist, Elliot Zoerner, who also performs a virtuoso riff using his own body as a percussive instrument. With the audience seated to the very edge of the performance space the show has a visceral immediacy as the acrobats perform seemingly impossible feats, muscles straining and lungs gasping for breath. Yet paradoxically, such is the strength, skill and balance of these superbly drilled performers, that it is the grace and control of their movement that is the most impressive element.

The show opens with a sequence that establishes the mutual trust and collaboration that exists between the acrobats and that is essential to their performance. One group of 'fallers' presents ever greater challenges to the other group of 'catchers', with the roles swapping and the falls becoming ever more perilous as the tightly choreographed sequence increases in tempo. Friendly competition is also an essential component of the performance as the difficulty of moves is ramped up and one by one the acrobats are eliminated. There is an element of schoolyard rivalry here, but when, after the entire cast performs repeated back flips until only one is left standing, the admiration and respect that the 'winner' is accorded by his colleagues is clear to see. Interaction with the audience is also a feature of the show. Cast members share their pleasure with us as a difficult sequence is deftly executed, but we are also invited to pelt them with plastic balls as they try to maintain handstands under this barrage of multi-coloured missiles.

It is, however, the aerial feats that remain most vividly in the memory. Jascha Boyce performs with extraordinary balance and agility supported above colleagues who are themselves standing on the shoulders of those beneath them. Rhiannon Cave-Walker's precisely controlled movements as she shifts from one hand balance to another seem to defy what is humanly possible. In the finale the two women literally take flight as they are flung through the air and caught in ever more daring moves. We are left gasping at the seemingly boundless capacity of the human body to move beyond gravity's constraints.

A large audience of all ages rose to give this superb troupe of athletes a standing ovation, and they in turn waited to greet us and thank us for attending their performance as we left. It was almost like leaving church, and we had indeed been participating in a kind of ritual celebrating the human body.

<http://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=8463>

CITYSCAPE

10 September 2015

If you think the body is a remarkable instrument – you ain't seen nothing yet'. Christchurch Arts Festivals' breath-taking entry *A Simple Space* is exactly what it says on the box – black floor matting, a few lights and up close and personal with some serious acrobatics by way of the tremendous talents of the aptly-named seven-piece Australian circus troupe Gravity & Other Myths.

There's no special effects, elaborate costumes, gimmicks or circus-type frills and, occasionally, no shirts in this pared-back and relentless 60 minutes of gravity-defying human towers, dread-inducing tumbles and falls, ridiculous feats of strength and balance, strip-speed-skipping and taking 'I could do that standing on my head' to a whole other level!

The deft, dexterous performers totally own the stage, and at times there's so much going on as bodies are substituted for jungle gyms, skipping ropes, musical instruments and Frogger-style landing pads that it's hard to keep up with all the clever one-upmanship, even up this close. Breaking down barriers between the performers and the audience, the intimate performance allows you to hear every exertion and rapid breath, and see sweat literally dripping off brows.

It's edge-of-the-seat, mouth agape fast, furious, fun and funny shenanigans (think Parkour without the park!) that doesn't let up until they sprint out the exit after a much deserved standing 'O'. Try not to blink – you won't want to miss a thing!

<http://www.cityscape-christchurch.co.nz/entertainment/news-views/entry/body-language-a-simple-space>

VANCOUVER PRESENTS

MARK ROBBINS

14th October 2015

A Simple Space is the circus equivalent of the best acoustic session the music world has to offer.

Stripped (sometimes quite literally) of the artifice that surrounds every production of a certain Quebec circus troupe, Australia's Gravity & Other Myths rely almost exclusively on their wits, and talent as acrobats, in a 60 minute show that will have you on the edge of your seat.

Along with daring feats of strength and agility, there is a vein of humour that runs through A Simple Space that makes it so darn fun.

Taking its name partly from the intimate performance space that the troupe normally uses, the current version at the York Theatre includes seating on both the stage and in the auditorium. And while there is little doubt that the experience for those on stage will be that much more enjoyable, it was a surprise just how engaging it was for those of us seated in the theatre.

Along with daring feats of strength and agility, there is a vein of humour that runs through *A Simple Space* that makes it so darn fun. Remember as a kid when you played the "lava game", trying to move around the living room without touching the floor? This talented group of five men and two women take that childhood staple to a whole new level. Even the skipping rope gets an acrobatic makeover. Ever tried to solve a Rubik's Cube? Try doing it while standing on your head.

Accompanied by talented musician Elliot Zoerner, even when not everything works the first time there is never any disappointment. In fact, this group is so likable that you can't help but root for them and cheer when they finally nail it.

There is nothing "simple" about what this talented bunch does in *A Simple Space*, so forget Cirque and consider this family-friendly option that also happens to come with family-friendly prices. And as they throw each other around or balance precariously high above the stage without a net, I dare you not to shed a few tears of absolute joy as you watch.

<http://vancouverpresents.com/theatre/review-a-simple-space-will-have-you-on-the-edge-of-your-seat/>

THE GEORGIA STRAIGHT

COLIN THOMAS

14th October 2015

All sorts of involuntary sounds were coming out of me: gasps, moans, little animal whimpers of fear. Then there was the whooping and cheering.

In *A Simple Space*, the Australian acrobatic company Gravity & Other Myths presents an hourlong program that will leave you wrung out—and very happy.

In stripped-down staging that's the polar opposite of a Cirque du Soleil extravaganza, the seven acrobats and single musician in the touring company occupy a bare, black space in the middle of the York Theatre stage. There are light stands on the four corners of the playing area and the simply clad tumblers flick the switches themselves.

The show is intimate. Some audience members get to sit on-stage within licking distance of the action, and, even if you're not that lucky, the York Theatre isn't very big, so wherever you are, it's easy to hear the sounds of effort. As the performers hurl one another through space, and climb one another's bodies to build teetering towers of flesh and bone, you can hear their grunts and heavy breathing.

You can also see them grinning like idiots, because, let's face it: they're having the time of their lives. The whole show is built on play, on the sheer joy of occupying a body. The tone is like a back-yard game, but the skill level is upped by about a zillion.

A lot of the numbers in the almost-wordless performance are driven by competition. So Daniel Liddiard tries to stand on his hands longer than any of the other company members can hold their breath, for instance—which means that he's upside down for frickin' ever. And three of the guys skip as fast as they can; whenever one of them trips up, he has to remove an article of clothing. Yippee!

But these are only the warm-up acts. As the evening progresses, the skills get ever more impressive and the tension ramps up. Before long, Liddiard is leaping from one set of shoulders to another, then he's flipping and tumbling through space in combinations that look impossible to land—and sometimes very nearly are. Jascha Boyce refuses to stay earthbound; give her some bodies to climb and she scrambles up to stomach-churning heights, as bright-eyed as a five-year-old—and her aerial flips cap the evening.

Rhythmically, texturally, and choreographically, *A Simple Space* is varied and inventive. In the opening sequence, company members race around, stop, fall straight backwards, and get caught by their comrades. The routine pops with all the geometric energy of a Piet Mondrian painting.

Kids will love this show. So will you.

<http://www.straight.com/arts/556881/simple-space-turns-stage-exhilarating-acrobatic-playground>

SAD MAG

MONIKA MALCZYNSKI

17th October 2015

Gravity and Other Myths just brought their 'A (Eh?) game' ... and you're going to want to see them do it again.

Remarkably skillful, hardworking, risk-taking acrobats, this Australia-based team of performers is pushing physical limits and personal boundaries. Their featured tour, A Simple Space, is honest, genuine and viscerally infectious. With a small twist of playful humour and a touch of over-confidence, the cast of A Simple Space will tickle your soft spots just enough to distract you from the physical angst you feel for the performers.

On opening night, A Simple Space's cast revealed their show (and a little bit more) to a mesmerized and fascinated full house. The York Theatre was the perfect sized space for Gravity and Other Myths' performance aims. Cast only by a handful of spotlights, the room was no bigger than a modern sized Vancouver condo (kidding...we know condos here are smaller) and housed the cast to its maximum potential. With nowhere to go but up, that's exactly the direction these performers ended up traveling.

The show started out with a game of trust. Accompanied by melodic pieces produced by live percussionist (and insanely talented musician), fellow Gravity and Other Myths member, Elliot Zoerner, the acrobats began a sequence of staged falls, one after another. Each acrobat moved with the music, exercising stealth, strength, and agility to quickly catch his fellow performer. Setting the tone for the rest of the evening, the opening act unveiled a truthful, trusting, raw approach to what could otherwise have been a flashy, over-the-top circus style scene.

Each following act only got better. Every cast member was given an opportunity to showcase her individual ability while being surrounded and supported by her mates. The team seemed prepared and ready to respond to any situation. Quick on their feet and graceful with their steps, the performers demonstrated cooperation, determination, and responsibility. Though silly and challenging games were played, every audience member watched with bated breath. The acts, ranging from a skip and strip contest to a front flip-a-thon, brought a unique set of skills to the stage but always kept the artists' focused mindsets intact. The show was admirable, entertaining, and nerve-wracking all at once.

Undoubtedly, I'd go see this performance again. It's family friendly, date night appropriate, and checks off all the boxes of 'cool things to do in Vancouver'. Check out the individual bios of Gravity and Other Myths here and be sure to scope out the listings for the next show.

<http://archive.sadmag.ca/news/2015/10/a-simple-space/>

VANCITY BUZZ

ILEANNA CHELADYN

21st October 2015

Going into the York Theatre, I had anticipated to see an attempt at a Cirque du Soleil show including a relatable narrative, simple character arcs, and bodies doing precise and well-trained feats to astound the audience. But my expectations for *A Simple Space* were blown away.

The young Australian acrobats (all in their early twenties) and their company [Gravity and Other Myths](#), are making a splash in the world of circus performance. Part of what's attracting so much attention is the way in which they change the frame through which the audience view their work: both literally and metaphorically – but I don't want to spoil the audience participatory fun.

I was surprised as I entered into the theatre to be greeted by a unique four-corner lighting set surrounding a fairly small, square padded mat and chairs for audience members. The live electronic drummer began the show and set a rhythm for the evening that both communicated and competed with the performers.

As the hour long show progressed, I was astounded time and time again by the quirky, tongue-in-cheek, vignettes of games that the acrobats and live musicians were playing with one another. Starting the work, the acrobats demonstrated the trust they have in one another and consequently built their trust with the audience. Such a strong agreement of trust between all members in the theatre allowed a sense of ease and welcomed a visceral enjoyment and engagement of the performance.

The acrobats were able to transform simple and automatic movements – walking, balancing, jumping, etc. – into extreme situations which pleasantly joined the ideas of human and beauty. Seeing the silent communication exchanges occur between the seven performers showcased the mechanistic splendour of what a body can do. Sure, there was a plethora of grunts and heavy breathing when the acrobats' bodies were feeling fatigue, but the grit of desire and pleasure proved the physicality of the work to be an admirable and relatable event. To be fair, the audience was oftentimes groaning louder than the performers in awe.

Another aspect that clearly divorced this from any circus performance I had seen in the past, was the way that the acrobats and musician performed for us, the audience, and for each other. The playfulness and passion described in the program was demonstrated in the performers while they were actively competing with one another. There was one scene of contending backflips in time to the musician's drumming where I questioned if they had rehearsed their failures as much as they had rehearsed the successes; did they plan who won? Did the performers anticipate a missed jump? If they did, it didn't show, and their authentic desire of performing was what truly shone through.

The acrobats' skill was nearly overpowering where I sat in disbelief that a body could do such a thing. Gravity and Other Myths gave a show that demanded the audience to see the performers for what they are; the human connection of seeing skin and sweat and enjoyment was engaging and exciting. I wasn't concerned that there felt to be no social commentary or critique; I sat in the theatre as an admirer and as a witness to the young acrobats' excitement in performing. *A Simple Space* offered a simple brain space, and a simple theatre space, but a far from simple physical space.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2015/10/dance-review-simple-space-presents-new-frames-physical-exhilaration/>

TRIANGLE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PAMELA VESPER

6th November 2015

On Nov. 5-7, N.C. State LIVE is presenting four fabulous performances of A Simple Space by a troupe of Australian acrobats called Gravity & Other Myths in Stewart Theatre in NCSU's newly renovated Talley Student Union. Although the space itself is, indeed, kept simple, the performance is anything but!

Gravity & Other Myths begins with a segment that could be called "Falling" — developed from the team-building exercise called "Trust." We've all caught one person who was "falling," but imagine catching three, four, or even five in succession, and from every angle! And that's just the beginning.

The show includes tumbling and contortions, synchronized handstands, body architecture, and high-flying lifts. There are no nets; the opening night crowd erupted into "ooh's" and "ahh's" and spontaneous applause.

The performers use each other's bodies as platforms, ladders, springboards, and fulcrums. Their simple attire allows the audience to focus on the expert physicality of their movements rather than glitzy costumes or props. It's Cirque du Soleil "laid bare." And speaking of bare: ladies, this show includes something special for you. When the jump ropes hit the stage, put on your glasses, and get ready with the dollar bills.

Other highlights include high-speed elimination back flips, jumping "rope" with human ropes, and walking and jumping on each others' hands, feet, knees, shoulders, heads, and faces. It's truly staggering. Each segment begins with amazing movement and gets progressively more so.

The troupe consists of six men and two women. One of the men provides music and percussion from offstage — most of the time. (Unless he is onstage, thumping out some body beats, solo.) This, by the way, is one of the instances of audience participation. Others include audience "volunteers" joining the troupe to become "stones" in a "river" of movement.

Other quirky moments are reminiscent of Blue Man Group. Watch for multiple instances of headstands and handstands and an amazing solution to the Rubic's Cube.

A Simple Space runs an hour without intermission. It is an hour of entertainment not-to-be-missed.

<http://triangleartsandentertainment.org/2015/11/a-simple-space-is-simply-out-of-this-world/>