

Edinburgh festival 2014 review: The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha - Cervantes with clowns

Zoo, Edinburgh From pillow sheep to psychic monkeys, this madcap debut from Little Soldier is cunningly constructed and wonderfully inventive

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It takes a bunch of dreamers, or maybe even clowns, to even think of bringing a version of Cervantes' Don Quixote to the Edinburgh fringe. After all, the novel features 126 chapters and 689 characters - you'd need a massive cast and a venue the size of Wembley stadium. It would be complete madness. Or would it? Maybe with a little imagination and some, ingenuity it could be possible. After all, where would we be without dreamers?

So, on a raised wooden platform with just a guitar, some pillows and a few homemade swords, new company Little Soldier recreate the story of the misguided knight, Don Quixote, and his faithful servant, Sancho Panza, with the enthusiasm of DIY amateurs. It may look all over the place, but it's cunningly constructed. These clowns know exactly what they are doing.

Like its antihero, it's all a bit mad, but rather lovable - particularly when the relationships of the cast are used to mirror the relationship of self-styled knight and servant. Best of all is an engagement with the audience that is direct, easy and all-embracing. Audiences might even get to perform as an army of pillow sheep or find themselves subjected to the extraordinary powers of the astonishing psychic monkey.

Although this is great fun, there is always a danger that if the company doesn't keep a tight rein on their material, it will tip over into all-out silliness. And it would be good if the show's examination of just how crucial dreaming is to our well-being and our future was more layered. But this is a promising debut from a young company with a show that embodies not just Cervantes' novel, but the spirit of the fringe itself.

. Until 25 August. Box office: 0131-226 0000. Venue: Zoo, Edinburgh.

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