

The Knight of the Sorrowful Figure, Blue Elephant Theatre

In Drama, Off West End, Reviews 🕒 23 May 2013 💬 0

Tiffany Wood from the Original Cervantes "Don Quixote"

Directed by Ian Nicholson

Research and development by Simon Day and Aitor Basauri

★★★

Pros: Never boring, at times comical and fittingly dynamic physical theatre. Good use of Spanish accents and guitar. Fun to watch.

Cons: Limited resources inevitably dictate small crew, bare props and no visual aids. But this was a work-in-progress after all.

Our Verdict: A thoroughly enjoyable hour of physical theatre, guaranteed to keep you entertained and leave in good spirits.



[Courtesy of the Blue Elephant Theatre](#)

Entering the South London gem, Blue Elephant Theatre, I was soon met with a feeling that I was in the right place to enjoy experimental theatre. Tucked away between Walworth and Camberwell Green, this great little space oozes familiarity and a sense of dedication to the cause of great new theatre.

As we entered the seats, The Little Soldier Production crew was eagerly doing whatever they could to make you believe they were really only trying this out for the first time. The props in the dark wide space were wooden tables, a wheel, some hay thrown about and a beautiful landscape of La Mancha's Countryside being hand-drawn there and then with scholarly white crayons, complete with a series of towering windmills.

And as the three actors introduced themselves and engaged the audience in a feedback session over the supposedly famous work that will be, the question marks painted on our faces soon turned into giggles and the occasional burst of laughter. Perhaps it was the pleasant contrast between the marked Spanish accent of the ladies and the proper British diction of their male companion, used here to good effect to create a sense of authentic farcical introduction to what was in fact a very serious attempt at reinventing the Don Quixote storyline in a bare 45 minutes of wonderfully executed physical theatre. Or perhaps it was the marvellous Spanish Guitar of accompanying artist Maria Camahort. Perhaps, it was just the good mood in the room, but everyone was soon ready to relax and follow the four performers into a whirlpool of laughter, surprise and anticipation.

And as the storyline develops and Alonso/Don Quixote (Merce Ribot) begins his fantastic journey through La Mancha in search of his beloved Dulcinea del Toboso, he will of course need his faithful Roncinante – the humble donkey-turned-horse. And as Don Quixote continues to add to gender confusion by swaying Sancho Panza (Patricia Rodriguez) away from his “gorgeous” wife (Dennis Herdman) and follow him in his delusional journey against ferocious monster-windmills, treacherous sheep, mysterious magicians living in the depth of the caves – the physicality of the performers and their interactions, kept us entertained all the way to the finale.

I was truly impressed, by both the hard work of this trio and the precise direction. The Spanish touches, magical music, changes in perspective and the sheer hard work of the crew make this a very sound attempt at reinventing this Spanish classic.

Dennis Herdman’s performance shined through with his interesting use of movements but no less can be said of Patricia Rodriguez and her very fitting characterizations as well as Merce Ribot’s gracious interpretation.

A fully deserved three-star rating that would easily become a five star if it involved greater resources and with it a greater number of actors, lightings, props and such. Well done Little Soldier Productions, y mucha suerte!