

See below our Young Reviewers' reviews of Best of BE:

The chosen review:

Harrogate hosts the best that Europe has to offer!

What an evening! This set of three shows is a perfect mix between a classic variety performance and exciting new artists, using a multitude of abstract styles to great effect. It is evident that the BE Festival brings together the top talent from across Europe.

The first performance is 'Légende' by Romain Teule (France/Portugal) - a fascinating and humorous performance about the tension caused by translation between languages, based mainly around learning the language of birds. This abstract lecture is a brilliant play on verbal humour. Teule uses tension and pause to great effect and oozes confidence throughout. Brilliantly intellectual entertainment.

Next up is 'What does stuff do?' by Robin Boon Dale (England). Robin's skill as a circus style performer is shown early on in his piece, through a captivating juggling display. However, also on show is his skill as a speaker, posing us his question, before answering it in a variety of ways, opening the minds of the audience to the idea of juggling as a learning method - measuring our ability and competence in interacting with our environment. An impressive, entertaining and thought provoking performance.

The interval is also great fun, with a short trip to Graveley's for a traditionally British fish and chips, between the powerfully continental performances. This also gives everyone a great chance to share their thoughts on the evening so far.

Finally, a slightly longer piece, of what many would consider more traditional theatre. 'André and Dorine' by Kulunka Teatro (Spain) brings a fantastic piece of drama to the Harrogate Theatre Studio. The story of an elderly couple and their struggle through Dorine's battle with Alzheimer's disease, this touching piece is told without words, through action and beautiful underscoring. Incredible masks are used to portray the various characters at different points throughout their lives, to great effect. This final piece is a poignant and moving end to a fantastic evening of theatre.

It is fair to say that these three performances are definitely the best of BE, and the question and answer session which follows is incredibly insightful. These three pieces, though very different in individual style are all fantastic. Watch out for these names in future!

Best of BE, Harrogate Theatre, 9th March 2018

James Murtagh, Ashville College

Here are the other Up 'n' Under reviews:

The Best of BE Couldn't BE Any Better! (Or even more Bizarre...)

The tour of Birmingham's European arts festival displays the best of emerging talent in theatre, dance, and performing arts.

The show this year opens with Romain Teule's mind boggling piece 'Légende,' a performance on the absurdity of language and communication, originally written and performed in Portuguese. The story follows a passionate birdwatcher who has gained the ability to replicate -though not understand- Teule's imagined language of birds. On this premise, he leads the audience through a presentation that forces one to focus on his methods of communication, and on how the visual and auditory language work together, or perhaps against one another. Interspersed with Teule's strange and skilful physicality, the audience are kept in confusion and suspense, waiting to finally understand the punchline which of course was always hidden in plain sight. Though admittedly the humour of his movement was at times lost due to its sheer length, it was always picked up again in his intelligent visual puns. This is without a doubt one of the smartest shows I've seen in some time.

Teule is followed by the equally clever Robin Boon, presenting 'What Does Stuff Do?' a piece composed of circus skills and pseudo-philosophy. Primarily using juggling with a variety of objects -and liquids!- Boon displays a heartily humorous investigation into how we interact with objects and the world around us, and how those interactions shape everything from our daily life to our ideologies. Remaining fascinating and hilarious to watch throughout the piece, Boon creates a marvellous sense of wonder in the audience, leading one to gasp, cheer and chuckle through his brilliantly bizarre thought process. Had the section of his show in which he stands in an inflatable swimming pool attempting to juggle water in wine glasses in order to prove that the act of juggling itself is in fact liquid been the entirety of the piece, I'd still pay good money for the sheer talent of it.

Finally the show ends with 'André and Dorine' by Spanish team Kulunka Teatro, though there is actually no dialogue in the piece whatsoever. Originally a much longer show of itself, this piece gives snapshots into the lives of an elderly couple and their son as they struggle with the wife's diagnosis of dementia; watching her deteriorate from a fussing-mother and masterful cello player into being unable to recognise her son or take care of herself even in the simplest ways. Kulunka Teatro not only handle the issue tactfully, but in fact provide a beautiful account of the universal love and grief shared by many families, particularly expressive through their use of character masks and gorgeously moving music. I dare anyone with a heart to watch this show and not shed a tear by the end.

In short; the night out is well worth the ticket, and the headaches likely to be brought on by the existential nature of the first two pieces. You will have your brain bent, your mind blown, and your heart broken. Utterly fantastic theatre.

Visit the Best of BE's facebook page for tour dates and to book tickets.

Jasmin Read, St Aidens

Forget Brexit, Harrogate Theatre is into European arts

From the language of the birds, to juggling water in a paddling pool, to the home of a couple suffering with Alzheimer's, Harrogate Theatre impressively take us on an exhilarating three-part tour of European cultures, beliefs and expressions.

First we are introduced to *Légende*, a bonkers and yet curiously fascinating exploration of pronunciation, syntax and literal interpretations for foreign speakers. Romain Teule's hilarious link between "lizard king" and "listening" force the audience to re-evaluate how words are interpreted. The occasional bird tweets and flamboyant hand gestures are a language of their own showing us that we can communicate with far more than just words.

"Tool" Robin Boon Dale then shifts the audience to question "What Does Stuff Do?". His innovative and almost scientific explanation of the interactions between humans and material is truly fascinating. Despite getting himself purposely stuck in a flip chart in some uncompromising situations, he skilfully pulls off ping ponging in all 360-degree angles as well as forming an effective fountain with three wine glasses. By the end of the performance, I'm relieved to not be covered in water!

On a much more tragic note, the last performance by Kulunka Teatro uses the universal language of mime to powerfully highlight the harsh struggles of André and Dorine to fight the beast that is Alzheimer's. André, looking back on much happier times in their relationship, wishes he could turn back the clock but it's all too late. Dorine's mind-blank when she sees her son - and her nervous breakdown when her husband's mask morphs in her head - is made even more upsetting to the audience with many having personal experiences.

So whilst we may be leaving the customs union, I'm glad that Harrogate Theatre isn't leaving behind European arts!

The Best of BE ran at Harrogate Theatre on Friday 9th March.

Lauren McGaun, GSAL

The BEst of the BEst

Fantastic and marvelous are two of the words I would use to describe the series of performances presented as part of *The Best of BE!* Every now and then you come across a unique show that truly plays with your thoughts and causes you to experience a kaleidoscope of emotions. If you have not yet seen such a performance, I can guarantee, after my exhilarating night watching three exceptional performances, that it is your chance to experience *The Best of BE!* The production's incredible range of performances focuses on the challenges of translation, our relationship as humans with objects, and the struggles faced in dealing with an illness as serious as Alzheimer's.

Romain Teule not only presents the beautiful yet intriguing nature of foreign languages in his performance of but also the challenges associated with them. His performance creates a balance of amusement and curiosity, captivating the audience through his every move.

Robin Boon Dale 'What Does Stuff Do?' introduces the audience to his philosophy about the relationship between humans and various objects through acts of juggling balls, playing with water, and ping pong, and unbelievably he does everything in his swimming trunks!

While the first two performances are jaw-dropping and leave the audience at the edge of their seats, the final performance by Kulunka Teatro really tugs at the heart strings. This performance focuses on the struggles of an elderly couple (André and Dorine) facing the challenges of Dorine being diagnosed with Alzheimer's. An illness so traumatic could have destroyed their relationship, but when it seems that hope is lost, André recalls what brought them together in the first place; love. Teatro's performance brought tears to my eyes and warmth to my heart. Who knew three completely different and exceptional performances could make you think the deepest of thoughts? Well, I certainly didn't!

The Best of BE was performed at the Harrogate Theatre on Friday March 9th as part of a national tour.

Camille Strudwick, Harrogate Ladies College

Best of Being Brilliant!

Unique, humorous, and insightful doesn't even begin to describe the talent displayed by the Best of BE festival acts. If you thought theatre couldn't go any further, you will be in for some exciting surprises.

First up, it's Romain Teule, demonstrating the complexity of language through the simple voice of birds. His manipulation of sentences shows us how words can be easily mistaken for something else and his act provides a comedic and entertaining insight into the English language.

Following on, "What does stuff do?" asks Robin Dale, as he turns a circus act of juggling into a philosophical message about human beings. From juggling balls on stage to tossing wine glasses full of water in a paddling pool, to almost wrestling with a flip chart - Robin not only provides an exciting half an hour, but leaves the audience questioning how we use our bodies in ways we didn't think possible.

Lastly, André and Dorine by (Kulunka Teatro) had me blubbering with laughter and sadness from start to finish. The intricate and uniquely designed masks are incredible, from the very beginning you are impressed and intrigued. However, the best part is the beautiful message of the story, showing us how even in a tragic situation, there is still love and laughter yet to be had which should never be forgotten.

The way they approach this difficult topic with such a unique angle is exquisite, demonstrating how actions speak louder than words and although we don't hear them speaking, everyone understands the story; portraying how we are universally united through actions.

Every act makes a wonderful evening full of humour, intrigue and emotion, all the feelings that give us pleasure and wonder from theatre - which is exactly why this show is a must see for everyone.

Best of BE is on tour around the UK until 18th March 2018.

By Millie Golden Hope, Harrogate Grammar School

A Night To Never Forget

If you like interesting and thought prolong theatre then Best of BE Festival is the performance for you. Best of BE is the top three performing acts of the bigger festival that took place in Birmingham each year. It's all about fascinating topics to unpick in your brain, possibly changing your outlook on life to be different. The three acts are *Lègende* by Romain Teule, *What Does Stuff Do?* by Robin Deule and finally *André and Dorine* by Kulunka Teatro.

Lègende by Romain Teule is an experience everyone has to see, as he unravels the understanding of words and language, demonstrating how just changing the pronunciation can make a massive difference in the understanding of it. Teule uses the fictional language of birds as a theme through the 30 minute performance, but also interacts with the audience by using long awkward pauses to elicit a response from the audience.

The next act of the three is *What Does Stuff Do?* By Robin Boon Dale. Dale uses juggling as a visual and physical way to have the audience see and understand where his idea is stemming from. Juggling cups filled with water to show how he can manipulate the water through control over the object, to prove that not everything in life is a pre-set deal but rather you make your own choices and outcomes in life. But not everything is so serious, most is light hearted fun as Dale also uses physical comedy to get a laugh from the us (the audience).

Andre and Dorine, an entrancing silent performance of an old couple that relationship has lost its way, all about overcoming illness and gaining back the love that seemed to have been hidden under life and career getting in the way. Even though the performance is silent, we can understand and interpret all the different themes being carried out. To make this particular performance stand out even more so, is the fact we never get to see the actors faces, only their masks showing one emotion. This performance was originally an 80 minute long play but purely for this festival it was shortened to fit the 30 minute criteria. Though the show was a shortened version, you wouldn't even notice anything if you aren't told previously that it was, as all the key parts are there.

I give this experience a 5/5. I think this is something everyone should experience - it makes you leave the theatre thinking of new and different things you may never of thought about before.

Best of BE, Harrogate Student Theatre, Harrogate

Stacy Taylor, 16, Harrogate High School