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Life minutely observed: Familie Flöz in *Infinita*

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Familie Flöz in *Infinita*
Photo Andrea Zani

Peacock Theatre, London
January 30, 2016
Maggie Foyer

Teetering on the fine edge between laughter and tears, Familie Flöz's *Infinita* is a warts-and-all celebration of what it is to be human, the perfect antidote to the daily bombardment of stories about man's inhumanity to man.

It is a remarkable tribute to the Folkwang Academy in Essen, founded by Kurt Jooss, that three of the four talented performers were trained there. In their subtle and infinitely detailed observation they seems to have an omniscient understanding of our human frailties and desires. They work in masks throughout; masks that in their bland simplicity offer the possibility of infinite interpretation.

The characters they create are at the extremes of life – opening with a toddler in a playpen and closing with four old men on a park bench. These moments, at the entrance and exit of our lives can seem remarkably similar. Here we are at our most vulnerable; and before life opens out and when it starts to close in, remarkably self-centred. Familie Flöz capture brilliantly this life on the cusp.

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Infinita
Photo Simona Fossi

It takes something as simple as adjusting the aerial on an old radio, twisting it to catch the best reception like a conductor's baton that gives rise to a whole symphony of sounds and gales of laughter. Or the one-upmanship of the playpen where 'it's mine' means just that and it's a no-holds-barred battle over the rag doll. 'Playing doctor and nurses' brings more hilarity and gets very close to the bone in more ways than one, much to the amusement of the audience.

The movement quality is minutely observed. The toddler struggling to find balance on two legs just like the old man his strong limbs now as weak as a child's but different in that his trembling is spiked with the fear that comes with age. These old men however are blessed with a mix of mischief and malice making matron's life hell as they plot to pop more than their share of pills. There is no space for sentimentality as a handful of pills leads to riotous behaviour.

A ball game inevitably engages the audience as a huge fluffy ball is kicked off stage to glee in the auditorium. There were plenty of eager hands to send it back to the kids on stage who do what kids always do – throw it back.

Infinita is a beautifully timed and structured show balancing comedy and sadness, skill and slapstick, and a surprise curtain call when the cast remove their masks, reveal their identities and indulge in a few flips.

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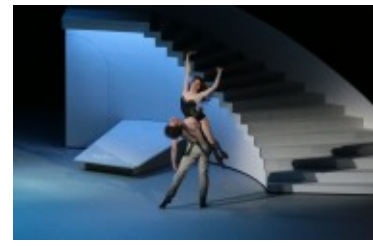


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