

## Reviews : Super Sunday

# Show captures the chaos of the circus

SUPER SUNDAY, CIRCUSFEST  
THE ROUNDHOUSE

★★★★☆

**S**uper Sunday, part of Circusfest at The Roundhouse, may be modern and playful, but it captures the spirit and spinning chaos of traditional Big Top circus.

The scene is set on a languid, sun-soaked fairground, with a dusty spotlight focused on an iron carousel.

Six men shuffle along the floor on horses to dramatic music – a self-deprecating, surreal start to impressive individual performances.

The Race Horse Company performers are casual men in board shorts and faded T-shirts, who tease one another and build-up a sense of seaside camaraderie.

Acts are pared-down, with men taking on the roles of clowns, set changers, strongmen and high-flying acrobats spiralling off the stage. They are dancers, dare devils and chaos-makers – always slightly out-of-step.

Performer Petri Tuominen, dresses as a teddy bear and becomes the unwilling prop of fairground-inspired tricks.

The giant teddy bear runs



■ Super Sunday at The Roundhouse

into the audience, but he is trapped by the unusually strong fairground staff who effortlessly send him up into the air. Odilon Pindat performs his acts with the greatest flair – the funniest and most self-deprecating, he dresses up in a skin tight gymnastic costume to attach himself to a seesaw contraption and flies up through the air. There are moments of pure joy and surprise. The performers jump on trampolines – and

suddenly, out of nowhere, hundreds of coloured balls surround them as they go up and down. And in another bizarre scene, the men, dressed in white robes, carry a cross around the stage with tall candles blown out to reveal cellophane wraps.

Tricks are impressive – including a barefoot march through huge elevated circles – but humour and whimsical set design mark out the performance.

Anna Behrmann

## A nostalgic, gentle gem

THE MAN IN THE WOMAN'S SHOES  
TRICYCLE THEATRE

★★★★☆

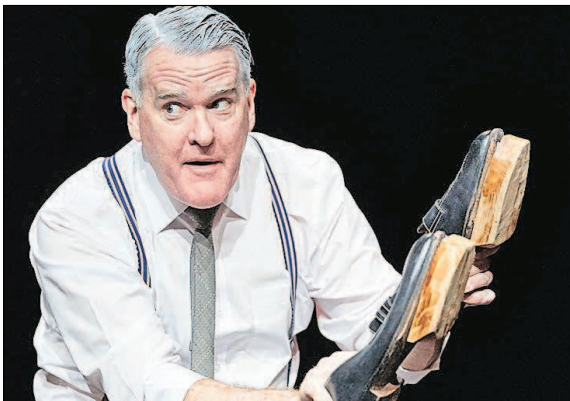
Where else can you find a spot on impression of a dog who thinks she's a cockerel?

That's just one member of the menagerie conjured by the extraordinary Mikel Murfi, who also summons chickens, bees, seagulls, pigs, sheep and a dying turkey, along with enough local characters to vividly immerse us in this '70s rural Irish community.

Murfi's 75-minute one-man show is unashamedly nostalgic and sentimental, as gentle a ramble as that taken by cobbler Pat Farnon, who's breaking in a pair of shoes for formidable local woman Kitsy Rainey.

However, his physical versatility, ear for idiosyncratic, often poetic turns of phrase and storyteller's effortless command mightily impresses.

Pat is intelligent, humorous and articulate, but the confident voice we hear is actually internal: he's been



■ Mikel Murfi in *The Man in the Woman's Shoes* picture: Mark Douet

mute since childhood.

Neighbours say fairies stole his speech, though the implied cause is trauma – “sadness can stop a boy's tongue”.

Murfi is an astute observer of the region's intersecting superstition and earthy common sense.

Traditions, like informing the bees of a death, are solemnly maintained, and the Catholic Church is a dominant presence, but Pat takes great delight in a chaotic football match, a full-voiced congregant duelling a pompous bishop and an irreverent debate about whether the Pope could be an

organ donor.

Murfi isn't interested in grand religious discourse, so much as small acts of kindness.

Pat, who literally walks miles in other people's shoes and listens rather than speaks, is the embodiment of empathy, and his tentative romance with the equally eccentric Kitsy is exquisitely joyful. The play was commissioned by Sligo Arts for a festival celebrating creativity in older age groups, and it's a persuasive argument for not overlooking those society pushes to the margins.

A real gem.

Marianka Swain

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