

Freefall – Buzzcuts Review

Clare Gilham | Sunday Mar 7th, 2010

Freefall is the latest show by the group of seven young performers who call themselves Gravity and Other Myths. This show is about phobias, fears and little things that just make you cringe.

Their unique blend of physical theatre and acrobatics is immediately revealed as the group begin scrawling fears on large sheets of paper lining the back of the stage, and then the phone rings. Tilly Cobham-Hervey picks it up and she gradually exposes her fears to the person on the other end of the line. This leads to an engaging little sequence as the other two girls, Brie Henwood and Jascha Boyce, coil themselves around the phone line breathing down her neck, mimicking her fears.

As the evening grows darker a low hanging light bulb is used to create the most visually powerful sequence. Triton Tunis-Mitchell and Brie Henwood swing the pendulum bulb about the stage, performing their partner dance in its path, just avoiding it each time as it returns its course between them. In the next moment the bulb is chasing them into each other's grasp, forcing them to greater heights and breathtaking tricks. The globe also illuminates the faces of each of the other performers as they too watch fears being faced.

But this show does not generally have a serious face. There is a good balance of pure fun and the theme of fears is addressed in a comical way. A schoolyard-type hoop-diving and flipping contest soon ensues, with each performer upping the ante. Martin Schreiber comes out on top with his high flying dive and Lachlan Binns' consecutive somersaults just keep on coming and are not to be missed. Jacob Randell is the resident 'strongman' forming the base of the towers and performing an impressive handstand routine. It was also good to see some traditional circus fare with hula-hoop and juggling making a deserving appearance.

When it gets going, **Freefall** really proves itself to be a unique and clever show, growing all the more impressive as the pace accelerates. A lot of thought has gone into the movement and use of each performer, which is no mean feat with a group of seven. They have done well to make this a cohesive performance where no one ever seems displaced. In fact, they have often used what may seem a difficult odd number to their advantage with this theme as one person is singled out in their fear, communicating this feeling of alienation and inadequacy. The performers complemented one another well and all have their moment to shine in solo and duo pieces, highlighting their areas of expertise.

One thing that strikes me immediately is the level of trust each performer has in one another. There is no fixed partnering here as they are lifted by one, tossed by another and caught by someone else. This group look like they have been performing together for a very long time. What a perfect art form circus is to explore fears and phobias when it is performed by a group that is the perfect exponent of trust in the face of risk, and they know it too.

This is a very clever dynamic group of performers who are holding their own in this genre and doing original material too. I might add that having seen their 2009 show (albeit on the internet) they have refined their skills and especially their choreography significantly. It is exciting to think that these young performers are only going to get better as they improve their strength and precision. I look forward to seeing what Gravity and Other Myths have to offer next year, because you can bet that they will be around doing bigger and better things.