

The Herald

The Herald Scotland

No Man is an Island/My True North



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Mary Brennan - Dance critic

Festival directors are always going to talk up their programming choices, right?

But Imagine's Tony Reekie wasn't palming off any wooden nickels when he enthused about the double bill by Arch 8 Dance Group (Netherlands). The target audience is the eight-plus age group but both offerings have the creative shine – and the sweat – you don't always see in contemporary dance-works for adults.

Out at Artspace in Craigmillar, the Dutch company delivered the kind of in-your-face physicality that makes audiences of all ages crane forward in near-disbelief.

In *My True North* we watched (from the seating bank) as a couple were gradually drawn together as if magnetised. He might briefly break away, but she would lock in on him – and vice versa – as if their togetherness was an inevitability and their fast, athletic interactions and precise counter-balances were all down to unseen forces of attraction.

Exhilarating stuff, but even so *No Man is an Island* took everyone by surprise. Especially since this second two-hander saw us on-stage, at thoroughly close quarters when company director Erik Kaiel was dragged, as if lifeless, into our midst. When a second man appeared, we reckoned it was A&E revival time. But no. He proceeded to walk all over Kaiel, as if he was a map or maybe a mat. Perhaps his barefoot balances were a form of acu-pressure, for Kaiel came to life, rising to an upright stance – with his fellow performer on his shoulders throughout.

Wow!