
Signdance Collective's new show is extraordinarily original and enthralling. This company's professed aim is to "merge several artistic disciplines together" and to "explore the creative possibilities that disability suggests".

Artistic director and leading performer David Bower may be familiar to moviegoers as Hugh Grant's deaf, and wonderfully honest, brother in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and with this company he is no less honest, in fact almost ruthlessly so. What he sets out to achieve in the most compelling of these four pieces is an expression of the inner journey he had to make in order to reconcile himself to "the Noise" - the tinnitus he has suffered since 1986 following an Indie gig. In this uncompromising performance he seems to become the sounds in his own head at the same time as trying to cast them out. It is as if a devil has taken root behind his eyes and he is determined not to be driven mad. Unforgettable.

Providing a dizzying background to this is some excellent live rock music (courtesy of Luke Barlow) and in the first half of the evening singer/songwriter Alex Ward also performs several splendidly abrasive songs of his own, accompanied by his own electric guitar and "sign theatre" from Isolte Avila.

The final piece conveys in choreographic terms the struggle between two people locked in a floundering relationship. Isolte's dance career was cut short by arthritis and her skill now resides more in a physical demonstration of emotion rather than perfect poise. The result is intense and truthful, and again the music (Mark Holub) captures all the jangling nerve-ends that go with the emotional territory.

Overall, there's no denying the company's bravery and innovative spirit.