

Theatre reviews

Pokey Hat Seen in Alexandra Park, Glasgow, Touring until August 3

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Reviewed by Mark Brown

Pace and precision are essentials in *The Pokey Hat*, the new family show by Glasgow-based children's theatre company Grinagog, touring this summer as part of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme. Performed splendidly by Louise Montgomery, Isabelle Joss and Ross Allan from inside an ice cream van, this delightful half-hour show is based upon interviews with people in the east end of Glasgow on the subjects of ice cream and the associated vans and parlours.

The show's three stories take us from a Glasgow tenement football incident (which is resolved by empty "ginger" bottles being exchanged for ice cream); to the ice cream parlour romance between Grandma and clumsy Grampa Giorgio from Barga in Tuscany; and, finally, a trip "doon the watter" to Rothesay. Each tale is told by way of fast and funny performance and wonderfully appropriate songs, ranging from comic Italian serenade and (that nostalgic favourite) *The Day We Went To Rothesay O*, to evocative new numbers (including an excellent homage to famous Scots-Italians) courtesy of composer Oliver Searle.

It is remarkable how much director Clare McGarry's production manages to squeeze into 30 minutes without ever feeling overloaded or badly structured. Everyone will have their own highlights but, some smashing ice cream-related puns notwithstanding, I enjoyed the exceedingly daft puppet show, entitled *Cinderella And The Drapped Cone*, in which the actors play the garish puppets.

Opening in Alexandra Park in Glasgow's east end, to an audience dominated by clearly appreciative local school children, *The Pokey Hat* is a beautiful little treat of a show.

Performance dates for Perfect Days can be found at pitlochry.org.uk. For tour dates for *The Pokey Hat*, visit grinagog.co.uk