

Togail Naisean/Building a Nation

Martin O'Connor

Tramway

Tuesday 20th February 2018

Martin O'Connor's Building A Nation, meanwhile, fuses poetry, storytelling and a cappella song to devastating effect. It's performed in English, Scots and Gaelic.

Moving from the story of Babel; early settlers to austerity culture, his dazzling wordplay touches upon notions of home, identity and a sense of things lost (community, industry and communication). Using hypnotic, cyclical poetry and scabrous wit, he ranges from asking if we can ever be nostalgic for rickets and smoke-filled rooms, to enquiring as to where we go now, facing an uncertain future since the post-Thatcher years, which cut the heart out of Scottish industrialisation.

O'Connor is a masterful performer and writer, making his stories feel as warm and intimate as a friend down the pub; yet simultaneously theatrically rich and politically minded. As Scotland succumbs to Mccorporate chains, the little person all too often gets silenced. Yet his words are not without hope; rather, they speak of resilience and kicking against the systems that bind and oppress, of keeping old languages alive, and bringing new possibilities. As language mutates and shifts, so do new ideals.

(Lorna Irvine)