

Review: Rian

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DANCE Rian, Fabulous Beast

St James Theatre, until March 15

This collaboration between director/choreographer Michael Keegan-Dolan and musical director Liam O Maonlai is superb. The mix of eight stunning dancers and five brilliant musicians is a perfect fusion of skill and joy.

From the gentle beginning where the dancers walk on stage one by one in front of a simple green cyclorama to the foot-tapping finale we are carried along on a wave of harmonious sound and dance that warms the heart and delights the eyes and ears.

Eithne Ni Chathain, Cormac O Beaglaoich, Maitiu O Casaide and Peter O'Toole, led by O Maonlai, are all multi-talented instrumentalists who play a variety of instruments including piano, harp, concertina, fiddle and pipes. Ni Chathain also sings like an angel. O Maonlai is a strong presence, but never an intrusive one. They are a perfect ensemble.

Dancers - Saju Hari, Zen Jefferson, Anna Kaszuba, Louise Mochia, Emmanuel Obeya, Keir Patrick, Ino Riga and Louise Tanoto - all fine soloists, work as a single beautifully melded unit. Their bodies are immensely pliable with fluid torsos and arms. They leap, spin, bend and wriggle. Arms are flung out and up. Dancers sing and musicians dance.

A beautiful, loving duet reduced the audience to silence. And again, after ecstatic applause at the finale, a solo dancer hand on heart, responded with an encore of gentle moving grace. It was both a thank you to us and to her fellow dancers and musicians. You could have heard a pin drop.