



Adelaide Festival: Foehn

FESTIVAL

## Adelaide Festival review 2019: Foehn

Jennifer Hullick, The Advertiser  
March 14, 2019 4:44pm  
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### Foehn

Family / France

Adelaide Festival

Main Theatre, AC Arts

Until March 17

It starts simply enough — a hooded character crouches cutting disposable bags into unrecognisable shapes and welding them together with sticky tape.

The finished product is placed on the floor and the hooded one circles, clicking to life metal fans surrounding the stage.

Then, ever so slowly, to the bucolic strains of Debussy, an humanoid creature emerges and begins to spin and swirl its own personal ballet across the stage.

The audience is held spellbound, waiting to see what airborne manoeuvre the creature will perform next, at first straining to catch a glimpse of the nylon strings that must surely be manipulating the figure as it dances to the music.

Soon our dancer is joined by other characters and the ballet swells from a solo to a pas de deux to a corps of prancing plastic figures who begin to interact with the puppeteer.

The genius of *Foehn* is the mind-bending contrast between the radical simplicity of its appearance — plastic dancers floating on currents of air — and the painstaking physics of its execution.

It is also that, despite their lack of substance, these creatures hold us transfixed, pulsing with life in a very human tale of both triumph and terror.

New characters emerge until an army of black plastic bags engulf the puppeteer leaving him vanquished, a low note on which to end the performance.

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The “plastic bag show” is puppetry as you’ve never seen it before — bin night will never be the same again.

— Jennifer Hullick

