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Reviewed by Katie Nicholson

★★★★★

You know when you laugh so hard you've got tears streaming down your face and you begin to cough, choke, and gasp? That's how funny this show is. And the audience weren't only ones in stitches - on occasion even the show's stars started to crack.

One day three friends are just hanging out: there's competitive Claudia (Sara Petersiel) who likes everything to be about her, there's Norman (Josh Matthews) the hapless goofball, and then there is Jonathan (Matt Chapman) who is generally caught in between the two. Out of the blue Claudia blurts out that it's her birthday. Norman and Jonathan play along and throw her a bash. It turns out tensions have been simmering between the three and this birthday celebration is just the trigger they needed.

The Only Friends We Have serves up flawless commedia dell'arte stylings. It's broad comedy, yes, but it's also incredibly smart, intuitive and subtle. The cadence of their voices, the slight bulging or shifting of their eyes, their every slight movement: all carefully executed to maximize every comedic opportunity. These clowns are experts in their craft and it is simply an incredible treat to see them perform.

Josh Matthews is hands down the funniest person I have ever seen on stage. Sporting a silly fur hat (which is most definitely moulting) he muppets around the stage like a dirty old sock puppet slyly reducing the audience to a shaking and giggling mess.

The Only Friends We Have explores the complicated minefields of friendship with probing comic skill and an absolute joy-to-behold brand of wackiness. One proviso: a strong appreciation of the absurd is required (and resoundingly reinforced).