

Review: The Four Seasons

By Su Carroll

The Four Seasons at Theatre Royal Plymouth

Theatre Royal Plymouth is an enthusiastic member of Dance Consortium, which brings the very best international companies to the city – in January South Africa’s award-winning Dada Masilo are here with *The Sacrifice*. The Theatre also has an important relationship with the very best this country has to offer. Rambert Dance Company (who bring their take on *Peaky Blinders* to the Lyric in March), Birmingham Royal Ballet (*Swan Lake*, March) and Sir Matthew Bourne’s *New Adventures* who are in *The Lyric* this week with their glorious *Sleeping Beauty*.

This week, while *The Lyric* is packed with the spectacle of *Sleeping Beauty*, fans of contemporary dance can enjoy the intimacy of work from a company based closer to home in *The Drum*. *The Four Seasons* by Cornwall’s James Wilton Dance is spellbinding. It has an incredible simplicity and clarity blended with movement that often made you hold your breath. The hour-long piece takes elements of Vivaldi’s instantly recognisable *The Four Seasons* and reimagines it with composer Max Richter and contributions from Michal Wojtas.

Choreographer James Wilton, who set up his company in 2010, performs with Sarah Jane Taylor in a fairly stark setting (design Vibeke Andersen, lighting Paul Milford) which means few distractions from the dance. Cleverly, the musical movements take you on a journey through the seasons. Spring (*The Singularity*) is frenetic and full of energy, like the shoots of plants forcing their way into the sun and gives way to Summer (*The Expanding Universe*) with its emotional heat and sensual connections. There is a power and a strength, a raw athleticism at play here that is quite intoxicating.

We slip into Autumn (*The Cooling Universe*), the time of harvest, full of hope and expectation, and then Winter (*Entropic Heat Death*) beckons. It becomes quieter, darker, but there is an understanding that this is a life cycle and it will soon be spring again.

The Four Seasons blends elements of classical dance with acrobatics, martial arts and the demanding capoeira dance. It is hugely physical. You watch in awe at the power

and control of the dancers. But this work is also emotional and engaging.



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