

## Review: The Four Seasons

By Sara Lamerton

### ***The Four Seasons* at Theatre Royal Plymouth**

It's official. Dance in The Drum is BACK! It only took 20 years, a new CEO with a commitment to performance diversity, and one Cornish based company to turn a long forgotten dream into a dizzying reality.

*Four Seasons*, by James Wilton Dance, performed by James Wilton and Sarah Jane Taylor broke through The Drum's frosty ground last night, creating shock waves of pure, unadulterated dance pleasure, setting the tone for a bright future.

An abstract homage to the universe, *Four Seasons* explores Wilton and Taylor's personal interpretation of the seasons from a cosmic perspective. Using symbolism, subtly effective lighting, warm and cool toned colour transitions, and Max Richter's exquisite modern version of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, the pair have created a captivating 50 minute performance, expertly displaying both their individual skills and athletic prowess, as well as their combined choreographic chemistry and companionship.

It's clear how much passion Wilton and Taylor have for their craft and for this particular show. Moving through each season, we're encouraged to explore our own interpretation of their expressions. With no rigid narrative, just a loose understanding of the underlying concepts, the audience is invited to feel their way through the artists' performance. Emotionally raw and captivating, the choreography represents this perfectly. Every move is intense and alive: from the universe's struggling birth of spring, to the vibrancy, expansion, and power of summer, the melancholic warmth and glow of autumn, and the cool, melodic dissent and unifying climax of winter.

Moving with ease, it's easy to forget how physically and mentally intense a show like this must be to perform, especially in front of an intimate audience like that of The Drum. Yet the pair never falter. Or, if they do, you wouldn't notice. Exquisite as they are together, individually they're just as spellbinding. Two stand out scenes for me were witnessing Taylor's use of a single handheld light to illuminate movements across her body and the stage; flowing, holding attention with grace and command. Alongside Wilton's solo scene in front of a warm, glowing, dusky spotlight. His muscular physique bending and flexing in time with the music, his passions and focus centre stage.

In the post-show talk, Wilton revealed the deeper inspirations behind their show; how the pair create performances of such intensity; their thought process behind the burgeoning universe theme; as well as the revelation that, as a young emerging artist, Wilton watched the last dance performance in The Drum 20 years previously. It would seem that the universe came full circle last night. Their rebirth inspiring and pushing forward a new era.

Although the next two performances are nearly sold out, there are a few seats remaining if you hurry. And, for those who perhaps aren't sure whether a dance performance is for them, I would say that The Drum's intimacy allows you to fully immerse yourself in the skills and talent of these artists. There's no pressure to feel as if you 'get it'. And, even though there are deeper themes and interpretations to be had, as a stand alone piece aside from all of that, it's simply remarkable to see a couple perform with as much passion and vigour as these two do. At times, they reminded me of figure skaters, or floor gymnasts. But, instead of a 10 minute routine, Wilton and Taylor are showcasing their love for nearly an hour, which is simply remarkable in itself.