

# The Herald

*Mary Brennan*



Review: Footprints, Cottier's Theatre, Glasgow

Thursday 26 June 2014

Everything about this bright, pleasing little show harks back to a casual 'what if...?' conversation last September. Ideas for Footprints were sketched out on a Monday, and by the Friday this collaboration between contemporary dancers and traditional musicians was a racing certainty.

Come August, after this initial airing at Cottier's, Footprints will be part of the Made In Scotland showcase on the Edinburgh Fringe.

That kind of gung-ho initiative deserves applause. So too does the show itself, which can't be said to break new ground, but which is nonetheless full of charm and gentle appeal. The music - by Emily Smith, Jamie McClennan and band - is a canny mix of the frisky and wistful, moods that the quartet of female dancers, led by Freya Jeffs under the name of High Heart Dance Company, then echo in their movement.

It's a nicely balanced partnership: dance tends to thrive on live music, but it's more of a challenge when the choreography is tied into the imagery in song lyrics. It all comes together with a swagger and a bounce in numbers like *Twa Sisters*, or with a floating air of reverie in Jeffs's solo to *Waltzing's For Dreamers* where Smith's voice soars exquisitely over her own piano accompaniment.

There's fizzing fiddle music, enough to make our own feet itchy for a dance, as well as reminders of how different cultures - the performers hail from the UK, Iceland, Australia and New Zealand - can come together and create their own Footprints. At less than an hour, you're left wanting more, so fingers crossed that the Cottier Dance Project, which Jeffs has curated as part of the West End Festival, has legs to carry it on throughout the coming months.

# The Scotsman

*Kelly Apter*



Review: Footprints - Cottiers Theatre, Glasgow

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**TRADITIONAL music and dance often cosy up together on stage, creating a natural pairing steeped in Scottish heritage.**

High Heart Dance Company has dared to rip this pairing apart and create something far less ubiquitous.

The musical set-up is brilliantly familiar – fiddle, guitar, percussion, accordion and the clear sweet vocals of Emily Smith. What differs is the choreography being played out before them – four dancers using a contemporary dance vocabulary to translate the music and lyrics into movement.

The collaboration works for a number of reasons, not least the obvious enjoyment of the performers. This coming together of musicians and dancers, grounded in a deep respect for each other's artform, produces a combined joyfulness and shared poignancy perfectly attuned to each song's requirements.

Drawn largely from new and existing material by Smith and New Zealand-born fiddle player Jamie McClennan, the music is a clear impetus for what the four dancers have created. Broad smiles and happy legs accompany the upbeat Fun with Colin, while more poetic moves bring Sower's Song to life.

The undisputed highlight, however, is a spellbinding rendition of Richard Thompson's Waltzing's for Dreamers. Smith (a former winner of the Young Traditional Musician of the Year award) sits at the piano, giving bittersweet voice to this achingly beautiful homage to lost love. Meanwhile a tender, graceful duet somehow manages to make the moment even more precious.

Part of the Cottier Dance Project, a new kid on the Glasgow dance block, Footprints is heading to the Edinburgh Fringe, where you would be advised to catch it.