



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## **MAN COVETS BIRD**

**Slingsby Productions**

**Space Theatre**

Until 7 Mar 2010

Review by Jamie Wright

A young man finds a small bird which he befriends; together they move to the city where they discover - while working in a factory - they can change lives.

From the moment you enter the Space theatre you are immersed; you'll be offered a box with a miniature projector inside to view, or a cone which produces birdsong to put to you ear, or an ice-cube or a lolly to suck upon. As you sit down on the blankets or the folding chairs or the benches you'll realise that what is beneath your feet (or seat) is not artificial lawn but actual turf, living grass cut and laid on the theatre floor. And that is only the beginning of a truly magical experience.

The story (Original Concept/Director, Andy Packer; writer Finegan Kruckemeyer) seems so simple a concept – but it is transcendent in its realisation. In the single speaking role – one that would seem trite in the hands of a lesser performer – Nathan O'Keefe is spellbinding; his combination of charm and energy and sheer sense of wonder is both contagious and captivating.

Quincy Grant (who also composed the music), Steve Lennox and Gareth Chin are a trio of wandering multi-instrumentalist minstrels whose non-stop playing - either as background music or whole songs between scenes – add an extra dimension to the production.

The set - by Geoff Cobham and Wendy Todd, with lighting by Dave Green - is simply stunning. As well as the aforementioned turf, there is a huge rotunda upon which much of the action takes place and includes moveable compartments to create the backdrop for the factory scenes; the entire east wall of the theatre becomes a screen upon which breathtaking projected animation appears.

It is an amazing, evocative, magical theatrical experience. This reviewer's only complaint is that the shortness of the season; perhaps if we ask them nicely – and put out some birdseed – they'll fly back...