

Baboró 2018

Paul Harman was there ...

Three hours West on a bus from Dublin Airport sits Galway, a city linked to the wider cultural world for 600 years. The maze of mediaeval streets is packed with people enjoying a rich web of social interaction. A major European University means there's always bright young voices in a mix of languages around you. Baboró is just one of many festivals but its 100 performances of 13 international class shows plus a score of workshops for children and talks for TYA pros are pretty much all sold out to school, student and family audiences.

In 2018 there was a thread of excellent Scottish work from established creators Andy Manley and Andy Cannon, who brought their own one-man shows produced by Red Bridge Arts and their cheeky pantomime-horse take on *Black Beauty* - a very clever family show, perfectly delivered here by two Irish actors I last saw in Barnstorm's *The Bockety World of Henry & Bucket*.

My other favourite was *Narrow (NIPT)* by Laika from Belgium. Two lonely adults, rather set in their ways, try to live together in a tiny space, annoy each other, give up, try again, find a way. Laika calls itself a theatre of the senses and the sheer delight of seeing two people wrapped around each other in a space two feet deep and four foot square, trying to do their own thing, works for anyone over six.

Classics on the world TYA festival circuit like *Tetris*, *Nosferatu* or Slingsby's Oscar Wilde story *The Young King* do not outshine Irish works like Branar's *How to Catch a Star* or Bombinate's *Half Light*.

Such is the respect for Baboró, that many festival programmers from the UK were there, with Boomer Stacey from I-Pay and Tony Reekie, late of Imagine. Not just to see shows but to talk about the work, exchange ideas on the future of TYA, think big and focus on the small details that make an event for children of all ages – and their parents and teachers – want to come to every year. I'm sure I do!

www.baboro.ie