



# CORR BLIMEY

REVIEWS, NEWS & PREVIEWS – EDITED BY DOMINIC CORR

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## REVIEW: UNIVERS,

June 1, 2024

### *Review by Dominic Corr*

Editor for **Corr Blimey**, and a freelance critic for Scottish publications, **Dominic** has been writing freelance for several established and respected publications such as **BBC Radio Scotland**, **The Skinny**, **Edinburgh Festival Magazine**, **The Reviews Hub**, **In Their Own League** **The Wee Review** and **Edinburgh Guide**. As of 2023, he is a member of the **Critic's Award for Theatre Scotland (CATS)** and a member of the **UK Film Critics**.



Where better to begin, than with the tiniest of tots and theatre for babies – an idea once relegated to the ‘yuppy’ concepts of extravagant behaviours. And yet, the **Edinburgh International Children’s Festival** begins with a steady dismantling of any indulgent ideas surrounding performance for babies. The least of which is because it’s not just these little ones mesmerised by **Barcelona-based Engruna Teatre’s *Univers***.

One of the opening pieces of the festival’s partnered **Catalonian** season, the show designed for the under-twos brings in a much older and more diverse crowd than some may initially suspect. An exploration of space, texture, lighting, and shape, with a series of tubes and orbs all taking place in the **Assembly Roxy** space. Initial anxieties from the youngsters (or self-conscious parents) fade as two dancers, **Maria Ballus** and **Anna Farriol**, gradually push the shapes and objects towards the front lines of the audience, most of the children unable to contain their glee, becoming more comfortable and engaged with the show.

Accompanied by **Jordi Sala’s** live score, which provides that final level of sensory tantalisation, the illumination of the spheres and the rippling containers all come together in a remarkably subtle production which embraces an early sense of discovery and curiosity.

**Univers – Engruna Teatre, Catalonia**





**Mark Fisher**

Tue 28 May 2024 13.42 CEST



★★★★☆

Children's theatre

**Review**

## Edinburgh international children's festival review - sensory magic and complex ideas made fun

### Various venues, Edinburgh

From a gentle exploration of tubes and spheres to a forthright examination of climate change, immersive puppetry and minimalist narrators, this is mesmerising for families and children alike

**N**ot too long ago, theatre for babies sounded like a crazy indulgence. Now, the Edinburgh international children's festival says it could sell out its shows for the under-twos several times over. Watching a performance such as Univers, you can see why. It is not only the babies who are mesmerised, it is the toddlers and adults, too.

Staged by Barcelona's Engruna Teatre, and part of the festival's mini-Catalonian season, it is a gentle exploration of tubes and spheres, delicately performed by two dancers, Anna Farriol and Maria Ballús, who also sing in accompaniment to Jordi Sala's live ambient score. On an open studio stage, they discover gold nuggets that tumble in and out of turquoise containers, while above them, orbs are illuminated and dangly lampshades spin. As the objects roll and tumble in the direction of the audience, so the children become ever more engaged with the action.

The production by Mireia Fernández takes quiet delight in the joy of sensory discovery. It is subtle and precise.