

## Fringe review: Happy-Go-Wrong

Andi Snelling is a multi-talented, highly skilled performer who knows how to use theatricality – and roller skates – to explore what it is to be human. ★★★★★

Written by Greg Elliott – Indaily



Andi Snelling appears in black shorts and top, on roller skates with an LED torch lighting her way, perhaps suggesting there is light (hope) in the darkness. With a flick of the shoulders, wide expressive eyes and a cheeky grin, she conveys that she is an angel.

She seems a little wobbly on the skates but it is only to give the audience a sense of insecurity and possible danger. Snelling talks with a French accent (she can obviously speak fluently in French) and quickly establishes a rapport with the audience.

*Happy-Go-Wrong* her own story: the tale of a performer who found herself in the fight of her life after a fateful tick bite left her dangerously ill and turned her world upside down. She describes it as “a profound celebration of mortality”.

It is a funny, sad, unusual and uplifting show; one in which everything is expressed through physical theatre, mime and movement accompanied with crisp, witty, philosophical dialogue.

Snelling has an excellent sense of timing and knows how to hold a moment, keeping her gaze fixed on the audience and leaving us never quite sure if the moment is going to turn dramatically or comically. There is suspense and mystery; she uses lengthy rolls of paper to move on, then becomes cocooned within metres of paper, looking occasionally like Winnie in Beckett’s *Happy Days*.

There are plenty of comic moments, including audio snippets of automated answering voices played during quick scene changes. Anyone who has experienced the frustration of contacting a government agency will appreciate the irony and cleverness of these voices, which offer little hope of assistance to the caller.

After performing only in her underwear for a physical theatre routine on a chair, reminiscent of athletes having to work out in their hotel rooms, Snelling dons a plastic dress and a big blonde wig. She then proceeds to speak with the audience but it is done with a feeling of absurdity and the smiling, cheery, small-talking character becomes a coughing, distorted being.

Snelling pushes the boundaries and challenges the audience to stay with her. Finally, she takes the bold step of removing everything and bravely bares her soul, her innermost fears and torments. Her performance is moving and sad, but warm and reassuring in its humanity and honesty.

Completely naked, she puts on her skates and confidently glides and slides around the stage, leaving us with a joyous image of human achievement and motivation conquering adversity.

*Happy-Go-Wrong is at the Bakehouse Theatre until March 20.*