

A Younger Theatre

Theatre through the eyes of the younger generations

Review: Prometheus Awakes

Posted on 24 June 2012 Written by [Jake Orr](#)



As crowds gather on a blustery Friday night in front of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, there is a certain electric excitement in the air. Word on the ground is that we're about to witness something spectacular featuring a giant puppet, video projection and a lot of aerial work. The crowds are gathered, the darkness descends and as part of the Greenwich + Docklands International Festival, *Prometheus Awakes* begins. Enthralled, excited and dispelling any myth that our public funding shouldn't go on the arts, disabled-led theatre company Graeae in partnership with Catalan street theatre company La Fura Dels Baus present the Greek myth of Prometheus, the man who defies Zeus by tricking him and bringing fire to mankind. *Prometheus Awakes* in its epic glory was spectacular, performing to a crowd of four thousand strong audience set against the darkness of Greenwich, this is street theatre at its best: epic, emotive and full of surprises.

Prometheus emerged from the grounds of the National Maritime Museum, a gigantic eight-metre-high illuminated puppet, a shining beacon in the darkness. Striding in front of the Queen's House, there was a remarkable flexibility within his walking; this clearly rippled through the crowd as the audience grasped their camera phones and gazed in awe. Well, it's not often you see such a thing casually going for a walk in Greenwich. Set against the composition of Jules Maxwell, there is no denying the epic scale of the work that made up *Prometheus Awakes*, using a combination of large-scale puppets, aerial performers, dancers and pyrotechnics. Directors Amit Sharma and Pera Tantiñá used the mythical story to bring life to the Maritime gardens, with stunning projections against the facade of the Queen's House by Simon McKeown.

Full of surprises, including a woman emerging from a fabric bag suspended above the audience, and some 50 performers harnessed to a crane and creating synchronised

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patterns in the sky. It's no easy feat to attempt to portray a sense of narrative in such a large scale project, but with the help of McKeown's projections (which saw fire take over the Queen's House or make it appear shattered into a thousand pieces), the emotive qualities of the Greek myth came to full force. Certainly a bold and ambitious production, and well worth braving the slight chill of the Greenwich night to see. Large-scale performance such as this have been slowly gaining momentum here in the UK, but it's great to see it embraced and visualised with such creativity. The thousands of audience members gathered in the Maritime's grounds certainly weren't disappointed judging by their reactions to the work. With a cracking finale of fireworks, aerial movements and a woman climbing up the giant Prometheus puppet to sit on his shoulder, this will surely be a production to remember for some time.

When all eyes are on London for the Olympic Games, it's great to see that the arts are rising to the challenging of producing work that speaks boldly and creatively to both UK-based audiences but those in our city from elsewhere. *Prometheus Awakes* became not only a symbol for the spirit of the current moment, but for the arts as a whole, a defiant message to all: we do the arts bloody brilliantly, and here is proof. *Prometheus Awakes* was part of the *Greenwich + Docklands International Festival*. You can find out more about the shows and events taking part in the festival by checking out the [Greenwich + Docklands International Festival website](#). You can also catch *Prometheus Awakes* at *Stockton International River Festival* on 2 August at 10pm. www.sirf.co.uk