

One Man and His Cow | Living Spit

**Living Spit's latest musical comedy is an accomplished, charming show with proper heart.
Words by Daisy Game**

Pigs might fly – and, according to Living Spit's latest fun-filled musical, cows might talk. Yes, really! *One Man And His Cow* tells the story of Trevor: a farmer whose life has, thus far, been of the pretty-standard-variety. He gets up, tends to his animals, and doesn't think a huge amount more on the matter. Until he discovers that his prize cow Judy can talk, that is.

The pair form a fast friendship and begin to while away the hours chatting in Judy's stall. But when Trevor is given just months to live, he's faced with a problem: to which of his three offspring should he bequeath the farm – and more importantly, its talking cow? Unable to decide by reason alone who is most worthy, Trevor devises a cunning test: Dicken, Greg and Maureen (none of whom are aware of Judy's ability to talk) must each spend one day looking after their father's prize cow – and the child who Judy feels the most pampered by will receive their father's farm. But, unbeknownst to Trevor, the chatty bovine has an ulterior motive – and soon sets to work sabotaging his plan.

Told through slick, rhyming couplets and merry song, *One Man* doesn't put a foot (and/or hoof) wrong. Ian Harris (Trevor) and Stu Mcloughlin (Judy, Dicken, Greg and Maureen: phew!) riff off of one another with total ease and pitch perfect timing. Clocking in at 65 minutes with an interval, *One Man* is fairly lengthy for a two-man job – but the pair approach the script with such a skilled touch that it remains buoyant throughout. The whole thing is made all the more impressive thanks to the pair's musical ability. Whipping out a violin here and an accordion there, *One Man* moves to the beat of its own highly original rhythm.

In a way, it's funny that this show works quite so well as it does. Since when does a man frantically switching between a cow hat adorned with cardboard trinkets, a wig of golden curls and an oversized beanie get such a raucous audience response? Since now, apparently. Because the odds are firmly defied – and a piece of rather excellent theatre delivered.

One Man is a self-assured, immensely charming show that had my companion and I laughing in a must-hold-back-the-hoots sort of way. Good, silly, wholesome fun.

Old Man and His Cow is playing at The Bristol Old Vic until Friday 5 May. Tickets from £8, available at bristololdvic.org.uk. All images by Craig Fuller