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# Loon an emotional, wonderful, silent Fringe tour de force

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Loon is a one-man silent play featuring a cartoon character who wears a mask that gives him but one facial expression. He lives alone, works as a janitor, and falls in love the moon. In less skilled hands such a show could easily be an ungodly mess.

But in the hands of Wonderheads, the two-person group that brought the much-loved Grim and Fischer to the Vancouver Fringe last year, the shows soars.

Loon is that wonderful type of show that can truly be called art. From the acting to the props, from the music to the staging, there isn't an ounce of wasted energy in the delightful, pathos-fueled love story.

The cartoon cinema janitor is played Kate Braidwood (the other member of the two-person group, Andrew Phoenix, provides the direction). With a wonderful mask that articulates nervousness and sadness (see picture), Braidwood's character has no problems conveying a gamut of emotions to the audience right off the get go. By day, he works his dead-end job and pines for love. By night, he looks up to the moon and imagines life in the stars – and his hopes for a partner become realized in the most unusual of ways.

The action is aided by a top-notch score – a cello-based motif conveys the janitor's dreary life, a horn-based symphony puts us up in the sky, and a collection of well-known songs and movie excerpts from the 30s to 60s provide both plenty of humour and a window into the mute character's soul.

True, it sounds more than a little bit like WALL-E, but it's an entirely different sort of love story. And at the end of the day, much like the Pixar film, Loon makes the

audience care for the main character in ways that words would never allow for.

It's a weird conceit. It's a weirder ending. And yet, by the time the lights dim for the final time, chances are you'll be sporting a giddy smile.

The long lines may be grating, but well worth it: this is a show the likes of which you won't see anywhere else, and will remember for a long while.