

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## The Farmer and The Clown

Adapted from the book by Marla Frazee, soundtrack by JOW  
Flibbertigibbet  
The Drum, Theatre Royal Plymouth  
28–31 May 2025

The gentle and sweet story of an unlikely friendship—between a grumpy old farmer and a cheerful young clown—is brought to the stage as a wordless play, full of humour, puppetry, imagination and music.

Devon actress Ruby De Ville Morel (making a strong professional debut) is charming as the buoyant clown who tumbles from a passing circus train onto the farmer's field.

Her reluctant saviour (Martin Bonger) finds his mundane life turned upside down as the youngster repays his kindness with an infusion of fun and laughter—whether stepping in cowpats, sowing crops or feeding the plump egg-laying chickens—and pancakes.

James Gow is the on-stage Musician (as well as part-time cockerel, dream clown and more) bringing music and sound effects as the surprising friendship blossoms but all the while dreams of circus life prevail.

The set is sparse leaving much to the imagination (although there was plenty of whispering as adults explained to their tinies) with blankets and stools draped to show the landscape, and there is clown, chicken and bird puppetry to delight.

Fun, kind and playful but 50-minutes was just a tad too long for my three-year-old companion.

**Reviewer:** [Karen Bussell](#)