

Dance

PERSON AND PERSONS UNKNOWN, TRAVERSE, EDINBURGH

MARY BRENNAN

★★★★★

THE dancers of Traveller Dance and X-Factor Dance Company had never worked with one another before but watching the eight of them come together on-stage signalled that they had simply clicked. With a surprisingly short preparation time, they had fallen easily into productive partnerships of mutual trust and confident daring.

The members of Janice Parker's Traveller Dance are adults with learning disabilities and Alan Greig's X-Factor team is one of Scotland's top professional companies. The linking-up affirmed what makes dance such a vital, pleasing art form for performers and onlookers alike.

Greig's choreography, for the most part a series of duets, unfolded like a beguiling collage of new-found friendships. The Travellers slipped into his hallmark moves – those lovely scooping arms, clean balances, turning jumps and wittily playful gestures – with unselfconscious enthusiasm. Their focussed engagement brought a freshness and degree of humanity to elements such as counter-balances, weight transference, high lifts and supported movements where the Travellers took responsibility for making the phrase happen.

They also brought stillness in to the mix – a different dynamic for the all-action Greig. Cesc Gelabert's brilliantly whimsical EIF production, *Arthur's Feet*, in 2004, was an important indication of what dancers with learning disabilities can produce.

Greig's choreography, fashioned without condescension or compromise, sees the Travellers dancing onwards and upwards – they are persons of unknown talents and Parker's bid to unlock those talents deserves encouragement and backing.