

## **VICTORIA FRINGE FESTIVAL 2017 – THE GREAT PRETENDER: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FAKER**

**Review by Chad Jarvie-Laidlaw – Showbill.ca Editorial Director**

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If you think that mimes are just silent white-faced fellas in striped shirts stuck inside invisible boxes, prepare to have your ideas of the art-form challenged by the charming Trent Arterberry.

*The Great Pretender* is an autobiographical look at Trent's career as a professional mime, treating the audience to major points of his life, from the womb to his decision to move to British Columbia. Through narration, amazing facial expression, and impressive control of his body, Trent tells of his struggles to escape the box of what his friends and family thought he should be (there had to be an invisible box bit) and finding inspiration in mime artistry. The story is a delightful and personal account of finding your calling and overcoming the obstacles that life throws up.

The show is most successful when Arterberry is at his most convivial, turning set pieces of mime performance into confessions about the highs and lows of his life. At times the speech feels a little too polished, resembling more a presentation than conversation, which distances the audience from the action. A couple of sound and lighting cues were delayed, contributing to a slightly uneven pace for the opening performance.

### **Bottom Line**

Trent Arterberry is an impressive mime artist, and challenges your preconceptions about the art-form. While *The Great Pretender* may not ultimately tell a totally new story, Trent's mime skills are exceptional, and well worth checking out.