

## **The Secret Life of Walter Manny**

This guy is good. From the minute he takes the stage, Trent Arterberry as Walter Manny is the picture of pure artistic commitment. Using mime, dance and his winning grin, Arterberry brings the character of a wildly imaginative little boy to vivid life. Walter, who lives with his grandmother for reasons that are left unsaid, dwells in a hypercolour world where he is a pilot, fireman, dancer, spy and naturally, Luke Skywalker. Arterberry's genius is that he not only keeps the junior crowd thoroughly entertained sans props of any kind for 45 minutes, but he also leaves room for a wonderfully heartfelt lesson about playground politics. Walter is an eccentric, fated to great things perhaps, but like most of those souls a little lost in the rigour of the scholastic system. Considering his target audience, Arterberry's message is surprisingly nuanced — imagination is a gift indeed, but a gift to be managed if it's to really benefit you. Arterberry's gift is twofold — storytelling that doesn't patronize and the agility to make it vastly entertaining. Suitable for five and up.

— Varnya Bromilow

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