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Credit: Arbery Productions

Desire and Pursuit, Etcetera Theatre – Review

Author: Anna Forsyth | in [Drama](#), [Off West End](#), [Reviews](#) | 11 July 2014 | 0 Comments | 236 Views

Pros: Some impressive moments of acting talent.

Cons: Rather plodding affairs, the plays lacked vim and vigour.

Summary

Rating

A brave attempt at tackling the big themes of sexuality and religion, but these one-man plays miss the mark.

Poor

User Rating: Be the first one !

The hot weather yesterday evening was kind of a pain, and for a large majority of the population this was because they were stuck inside watching the dulllest World Cup match ever played. But for me, it was because I was sat in one of the hottest theatres in the world, *The Etcetera*.

First up was *Angel* in which a priest tells an unseen guest about his struggle to maintain his vow of chastity. Our protagonist rails against God, the females who tried to tempt him and the men that succeeded. There is some initial tension but all of the twists can be seen a mile off, and the play just plods towards a pretty obvious climax.

The acting in this first play (Christopher Peacock) didn't come off as natural; Peacock's 'Important Ghost' voice felt and sounded put-on to me. This isn't where the piece falls down though; it's more the fact that the form doesn't really make sense. The priest lectures at his guest but the reason for the one-sided exchange is never really fleshed out and half the time you forget the guest is even there, and Peacock certainly seems to.

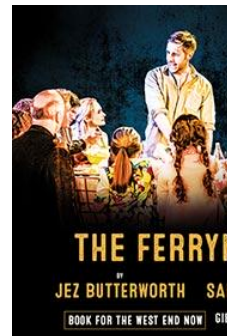
Christopher Annus' performance in the second piece was a more convincing fiction, but the writing was weaker in my opinion. The form held more promise and made more sense: recordings of crowds in Rome celebrating the new Pope neatly framed the monologue and gave the piece context. However, nothing much of interest ever really happens and the overwhelming feel is of watching a live feed of the *Big Brother* house with all the quotidian, mundane parts left in.

By the time we get around to *Tadzio Speaks* I am baking in the theatre, despite the breaks between plays. The upside to this is we totally believe we are on the beach where the action is set, a set-up reminiscent of Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. Despite the heavily reflective and nostalgic tone, this piece was a little



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underwhelming. Peacock suited this part better however, and I was pleased that he no longer sounded like he was doing an impression of the Ghost from *Hamlet*.

I liked that these pieces were challenging, and charged headfirst into the tricky areas of religion and sexuality. Unfortunately, the structure and execution weren't strong enough to really connect with this reviewer.

Author: Martin Foreman
Director: Martin Foreman
Producer: Arbery Productions
Box Office: 020 7482 4857
Booking Link:
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ABOUT ANNA FORSYTH



Writer. Anna is a born, and bred Londoner who lost herself up North for a few years, and then got really lost – all the way to Canada. The way to Anna's theatrical heart is Pinter, onstage gore, or a tall leading man with a Welsh accent. When she's not out enjoying Shakespeare or something equally cultural, you'll find her yelling at the TV at Arsenal/Vancouver Canucks/England Cricket Team/her favourite poker players. Two arts degrees have not stopped her from loving cheesy musicals.

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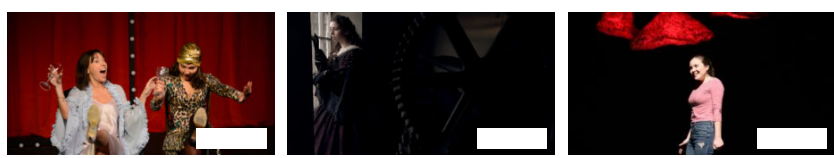
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