



August 10, 2019

Scheduling problems mean more writing here about another show at No:Intermission Festival that has already finished. But watch out for a revival of *Bleach* or, with luck, more solo work from actor Tom Crotty. It's a stunning foray into the one-person show format for this artist and, with finely considered direction from Rosie Niven, the show is a mesmerising 60 minutes of darkly comic and deeply upsetting theatre. Awful and shocking in places.

There were many gasps from the more vocal of the audience as this queer play from UK playwright Dan Ireland-Reeves pulls no punches in its visceral and realistic portrayal of a young man's life as a sex worker in London. Tyler is pretty arrogant about it - his success in his "job". He shows us through his backpack and the items put us in no doubt about the tools of trade. Tyler assumes our acceptance and urban sophistication about his life, with details unspared about clients and practices. However, Tyler also has weak moments where he is victimised by circumstances and a kind of impotence that no blue pill can fix.

Crotty grabs that first sex joke, it's in the backpack, by the "sweaty member". It is slowly placed, with absolute precision and he takes his time in enjoyment of the effect. Those gasps, most young female, and the uncomfortable air in the room, mostly older patrons, are drawn from absolute attention to the performance. By this time Crotty has created the character with an absorbing realism. The command of Tyler's accent sites him, the arrogance of youth is palpable and Tyler's wry and funny view of his world is attractive. And Crotty has stylistically naturalistic way with the stream-of-consciousness which makes Tyler believable and engaging. We trust his narration because he is open, young and in danger to our way of thinking.

One of the reasons for the power of *Bleach* is how Niven and Crotty have very successfully trusted the writing. There is very little layered over Tyler's words and the flashbacks are discrete and shared with a certain stillness.



Crotty, however, maintains the energy through the emotional troughs and doesn't falter in characterisation and audience contact.

The audio is cleverly used in this show. The Festival has not been a showcase for tech but on this occasion Georgia Condon's design really adds atmosphere with well sourced sounds, like the muddied train over bridge, and engineered with skill. The muted disco was particularly excellent in this regard. And the music of 'porn track' made my companion nudge me with recognition.

You may get to read this before the show tonight ... get along ... Bleach is stonkingly good theatre.

[Bleach](#) is part of the [No:Intermission](#) One Act Play Festival

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