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Bleach - Adelaide Fringe Review

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by **Chloe Cannell** (subscribe)

I'm a writer with a love of young adult novels, musical theatre and vegetarian food.

Event: 05/03/2020 - 08/03/2020

A dark coming of age story about a rent boy in London

Overall rating (out of 5 stars): ★★★

Bleach is a dark one-man show starring **Tom Crotty** following the story of a twentysomething sex worker named **Tyler Everett** whose life takes a turn after a traumatic incident at a job.

Tyler has just moved out of his parent's home in a dead-end town to enjoy the big city lifestyle of London while many of his school friends have gone to University. Crotty brings great energy to this performance and holds eye contact with different audience members while still keep the rest of the audience engaged.

The use of minimal key props foreshadows their importance to the story. The mention of lube and condoms are quick laughs, but a reference to avoiding STI checkups is more concerning than funny (and inaccurate for most sex workers).

The story introduces Tyler's sexuality in a clever and humorous way, taking it back to his adolescence. Later, the show makes references to gay hook up culture, including clubs and drugs, that unfamiliar straight audience members can follow without explicitly explaining it for their benefit.

Directed by **Rosie Niven**, the show makes great use of the small stage and a cube acting as furniture. The show's use of space and sound, as well as Crotty's movements, helps it fluidly move between scenes.

Crotty brings the climatic, erotic violent scene to life by himself; the audience can clearly imagine the other characters and blood that would be in the scene. The show skillfully shifts pace and mood as it moves on from the dark scene while showing the emotional impact it has on Tyler.

The show makes a small aside about the police's lack of interest in reporting crimes that happen to sex workers which could have been a more poignant point for the show to highlight.

Tyler unravels from the traumatic incident while experiencing a relationship breakdown and family trouble. Crotty's strong movements and facial expressions, as well as occasional shouting, reveals Tyler's post-traumatic stress.

Playwright **Dan Ireland-Reeves** has created a believable young gay man confused and angry about his place in the world, but the portrayal of sex work shows poor research and sends concerning themes about sex work as inherently immoral and dangerous for reasons other than poor legislation. Whiteness is also a recurring theme in the play because of the character and his circle's identity, an odd reverse racism joke, the motif of Tyler's underwear and the title of the play so teasing this out could explore the prevalence of racism-as-preference in gay male culture and similarly in the sex industry.

Bleach is quality gay theatre with good, simple production and strong acting but sadly, depicts a dark, exaggerated view of the sex industry.

Bleach is playing at the Colony Room at Mercure Grosvenor Hotel Adelaide as part of Adelaide Fringe March 6-7. Tickets at [FringeTix](#).



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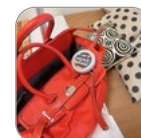
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