

A YOUNGER THEATRE

Review: FIRST 2015: Playing With Myself, Tristan Bates Theatre

by Tal Fox (www.ayoungertheatre.com/category/theatre) on February 18, 2015



The First Festival at the Tristan Bates Theatre gives solo acts an opportunity to showcase their work. On Sunday 15th February, David Forest took to the stage to perform his own original songs in his one man show – Playing With Myself.

The suggestive title is more than appropriate for a one man show like this: a man, a piano and his music. All of the songs are completely original with piano arrangements by Charles Miller and directed by Harry Landis. Forest sings songs inspired by memorable moments in his life and the people who helped to make them memorable. Many of the songs are reflective of the struggles of being a gay man in the 1950s, but despite recalling a quite shocking encounter with a psychiatrist who insists he isn't gay but just looking for a father figure, Forest keeps the show upbeat the whole way through.

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He sings about his 'big black friend' from the swimming pool, his fishmonger crush, his favourite bus driver and same-sex dancing, with the utmost wit. Each song seems funnier than the last and the audience were loving every moment. If the audience guessed the punch line, they were laughing before he sang it and if they hadn't, they were laughing as soon as he said it. The songs are filled with very cleverly thought-out innuendos that he presents with perfect timing.

Each song was preceded with extremely entertaining anecdotes from various points in his life. The audience learn about his experiences with the BBC, his slightly confusing girlfriend and his many walks around the country. As well as being hilarious, his life stories were fascinating and often unpredictable.

As a younger audience member, there are certain references that went straight over my head but I could understand the gist of the joke and it was still very amusing nevertheless. It is a welcome change to see an older man discuss themes that would have been considered taboo when he was growing up and all the more as he is able to laugh at it.

It's a wonder that Forest isn't a YouTube sensation yet. I could have happily sat there and listened to him for longer and I hope audiences can expect to see more of him on stage and maybe on our screens too.

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NEXT PERFORMANCES: *Tristan Bates Theatre, WC2H 9NP (Camden Fringe)*
Saturdays at 3pm on 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th August 2015
www.tristanbatestheatre.co.uk or call 020 7240 6283



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