

British Theatre Guide

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Treya's Last Dance

Shyam Bhatt
Outlandish Cats
Tristan Bates Theatre
6 September 2015

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Shyam Bhatt

Visitors to Tristan Bates Theatre could expect something special from this 45-minute solo performance thanks to its selection as Pick of the Hollywood Fringe earlier in the year.

Treya's Last Dance lives up to the hype, combining comedy and tragedy in a satisfying play performed by the writer.

In fact, it presents a very good showcase for the multi-talented Shyam Bhatt, not only allowing viewers to enjoy her writing and acting abilities but even offering a glimpse of her skills as a classical Indian dancer. She gets good assistance from director Tiffany Nichole Greene, although the lighting at this performance was somewhat eccentric.

Treya is an Anglo-Asian woman, probably in her early 20s, with the mildly irritating accent of her native South London.

Following the dance, which ends in comic catastrophe, she explains that, having broken up with her latest beau, a couple of rather clingy parents have booked a night out speed dating.

This proves to be suitably comic, as the young woman fights her way through a series of unsuitable companions, all the time talking nine to the dozen about her own problems and, in particular, issues around her brother T's homosexuality.

Pleasingly, his parents are accepting both of the youngster's nature and his partner Mo. Others though, particularly from the immigrant community, make life far more difficult after T comes out.

What had initially seemed like a pleasantly witty light comedy about the difficulties of mating when you have one foot in your traditional, hereditary community and another in its brash modern replacement then turns into something significantly deeper. However, pending an anticipated longer run, it would be unfair to reveal the issue that takes it in that direction.

In any event, this is a well-constructed play that proves Shyam Bhatt both to be a good writer and a talented mimic, whose variety of accents never lets her down.

Treya's Last Dance is also, by its ending, deeply moving in a way that is rare in productions of this type and, of its nature, that could make the piece a perfect fit for the Edinburgh Fringe.

Reviewer: Philip Fisher

