

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Review: Paper Tom (*****)

Sometimes you just have to go away from the gaggle of central Fringe venues to find a real gem of a drama; Paper Tom is one of those. It deals with the tales of soldiers who suffer from shellshock and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the trenches in World War I and later in Afghanistan. The ways in which this tore couples apart after the war, due to feelings of isolation and dislocation from wider society are graphically illustrated.



Sandy King and Steven Rogers who portray Tom/Dave and Harry/Richard respectively should be commended for their performance. PTSD and mental health is so often a subject swept under the carpet as a taboo whereas the story needs to be told.

We, as the general public see the men returning home “as heroes” and then they are forgotten about. The drama reinforces the message that when soldiers are away from home there are often forlorn feelings of being without a loved one, and although they still have their military mates around them, their lives can be snuffed out at a moment’s notice. The subtle differences between the cultural changes over 95 years are explored, showing that men are human and still suffer, regardless of the age or war.

This is a powerful compelling play, in which you feel yourself sucked into the story, and it is stunning. Many military families would readily identify with it.

There are some fast costume changes and the innovative use of actors to hold paper so that images can be projected on to them – not simple at all!

The lunchtime slot does not get in the way of many other popular artists and it is a good way to start off the day at the Fringe. It would be a real shame if you were to miss it.

[Paper Tom](#) can be seen at The Hill Street Theatre at 12.30pm
Daily until the 29th Aug (not 17 & 24th)