

Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Tea at Five

✖ Katharine Hepburn Returns To Edinburgh in Tea At Five

by Matthew Lombardo

2-3, 5-10, 19-24 August 11.05am 50m £7 (£6) 11-17 August
10.05am 50m £6 (£6)

Surgeons Hall, theSpaceUK, Nicholson St, Edinburgh, EH8 9DW
Box Office: 0131 510 2384

It started with her triumphant British theatrical debut at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1952, and she would later call it the biggest disappointment of her career.

At the 1952 Oscars, Katharine Hepburn receives her fifth Oscar nomination for *The African Queen* and is on the cover of *TIME* magazine. At the height of her fame she walks away from movies for three years, that summer coming to Edinburgh to make her British stage debut performing Bernard Shaw's *The Millionairess*, which then transfers to the West End. *The Millionairess* was acutely personal to Hepburn – her parents read Shaw to her when she was a child, and she was overjoyed when it transferred to Broadway that winter.

Yet lukewarm reviews from Broadway damaged then play's prospects. Hepburn struggled for years to get it adapted into a film: she employed Preston Sturges to write the screenplay, offered to work for free and to pay the director herself, but no studio picked up the project. In a rollercoaster career of highs and lows, Hepburn called this the biggest disappointment of her career.

Now Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre Company are bringing Katharine Hepburn back to Edinburgh in an acclaimed revival of *Tea At Five*, Matthew Lombardo's one-woman play recounting the life and final days of Katharine Hepburn which debuted in 2002 with Kate Mulgrew (*Captain Janeway*, *StTrek: Voyager*) in the lead role.

Old Joint Stock revived the piece in 2012 with Meghan Lloyd in the lead role and the production swept the Stratford-Upon-Avon Fringe last summer, winning Best Solo Performance and Lloyd taking home the Best Actress award. Now the company are bringing Katharine back to Edinburgh for performances at Surgeon's Hall throughout August 2013.