

Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Avenue Q *****

☒ Few musicals offer such unadulterated fun as Avenue Q and this production by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland at the Assembly Rooms is a sure fire winner. We open on Avenue Q, a down market street in New York where our puppet characters (held by singing puppeteers) and some humans live. Princeton, right out of college, comes to live there and soon meets his on-off girlfriend-to-be Kate Monster (both puppets), Nicky and Rod (two more puppets, one gay but in denial), Brian the failed comedian and his fiancée Christmas Eve (both humans!) and several more including a Gary Coleman character (yes, the one from Diff'rent Strokes).

It's all a bit like a musical comedy dream sequence of a cross between Friends and Sesame Street. If that sounds off-putting then it shouldn't.

The main plot or theme is just everyone learning to get along together but the best way to describe how the fun unfolds is perhaps through the opening lines of some of the songs "Everyone's a little bit racist some times. It doesn't mean they go around committing hate crimes" is an indiscreet "study!" of our everyday racism that we try to ignore. "What do you do with a BA in English" is Princeton's opening lament.

"If you were gay, that'd be ok" says Ricky of Rod, while Rod has to invent "My girlfriend who lives in Canada" to keep everyone from guessing his secret. "The more you love someone, the more you want to kill them" sings Christmas Eve. "You can be as loud as the hell you want when you're making love" sings Gary and there are many many more.

Politically correct it is not but the incorrectness is so tongue in cheek that you are carried along, especially when most songs are "sung" by puppets. It's impossible to be

offended and the songs are superb.

The whole cast is great but I'd offer special praise to Jimin Suh who is hilarious as Christmas Eve, the Japanese would-be therapist (with an occasional temper) – she's so cool that she scarcely seems to be acting. Also amazing are the flawless American accents on show. If I had to criticise I'd say that there are perhaps too few innovations from the original Broadway production and sorry, but Trekkie Monster's Scottish accent doesn't quite work in a New York show either. But I'm speaking as a fan.

It'll be a while before an Avenue Q comes back around so get down to see this one now.

Reviewer Ronalda Orr

Avenue Q at the Assembly Rooms Fringe till 26 August 2013.
[Tickets and more details here.](#)