

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW Fight Night @ Traverse

\*\*\*\*

☒ Fight Night at The Traverse is a fascinating psychological and (gentle) political theatre piece which really gets the audience thinking. The format is familiar but unique in theatre in that it takes the current vogue for TV sudden death voting and applies it to a broadly political frame-work; this is where the psychology comes in as the audience's prejudices and preconceptions are gradually exposed in the guise of democracy.

The voting is round by round, set on a canvas clad stage as the candidates are whittled down to a winner, the blows being all in wit and nuance.

The format is very clever and audience led – with permutations which the performers exploit with consummate skill and entirely natural aplomb, guided by the somewhat sinister referee.

The point of the piece is to expose the charade of our so called democratic process, and this it effectively does, taking a swipe at all forms of strategic vote manipulation (and of course coalition) along the way. The climax of the evening, with a stand off between the one remaining candidate and a growing gang of refuseniks and audience members encouraged to 'occupy' the stage, is a delight and a terror to behold, speaking volumes for the fragility of the democratic system, and elegantly illustrating its central flaws, - namely the idiocy and irrationality of the voter.

But this play also highlights the lamentable limitations of available viewpoints worth voting for. Ultimately the piece reverberates as a plea for political clarity and genuine

choice, but it leaves the audience in amused despair that this could ever be achieved while mere human beings are doing the campaigning, and indeed the voting. Clever, succinct, shocking, thought provoking and funny, this play's only weakness is perhaps that it dares not (perhaps cannot) suggest a better way of electing leaders, on the contrary the play stands as a subdued warning to the voices of protest in the current distinctly rigged system – for while a certain section of the audience may find themselves a little smug at the end (I won't reveal how); in the real world the idealists and voices for change would immediately become the most disenfranchised and vulnerable members of society.

Great theatre.

Submitted by [Ade Morris](#)