

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Jekyll & Hyde \*\*\*.5

Staging a radical retelling of Robert Louis Stevenson's original a stone's throw from the author's alma mater is a pretty gutsy move. Even more so, when we're within walking distance of Deacon Brodie's, the pub bearing the name of the real life inspiration for the story. What's more, this tale of Gothic horror (set contemporaneously with RLS's classic) carries echoes of Jorge Luis Borges, Iain Banks, and the modern master of the genre, Patrick McGrath. It's got a lot to live up to.

Flipping the Bird and Red Shift's production evokes a "sulphurous universe" in a stark staging at the Assembly Roxy, making use of a simple set, an eerie score by Laurence Osborn, and allusions to Stevenson's methods in creating the story of the tortured doctor. As the play begins, we learn of a manuscript describing events so gruesome that the only way its creator can rid himself of the resulting poison is by excising it upon the page. We then dive into the story within the story, following lawyer Henry Utterson on his weekly walk through London with his friend Lawrence Enfield, who tells him of a gruesome killing. His knowledge of this event, together with an interesting will that he is working on, bring him into the sphere of Dr. Jekyll, and her mysterious associate, Hyde.

Jessica Edward, the director, wishes that the audience keep the surprises of the night to themselves, but that didn't stop her "co-conspirators" chattering about the night's events as they left the venue. Delivered in a somewhat distancing, mannered style, Jekyll & Hyde spends its hour running time on the edge of doing something special, though in the end, its reach exceeds its grasp.

Nevertheless, it's a pleasure to see ambitious new theatre at

The Fringe, and be encouraged to revisit Stevenson's Strange Case.

Submitted by [Ricky Brown](#)

