

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas ****



Nestled in the corner of the Pleasance Courtyard is a theatre that, when the lights dim, holds one of the Fringe's most frenetic productions. Lou Stein's theatrical interpretation of Hunter S Thompson's **Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas** is psychotic and laced with morbid humour – just as every adaptation of it should be.

A journalist and attorney drive fast through the desert with their sights set on Las Vegas. They may have been assigned the task of reporting from the Mint 400 motorcycle race, but with a land of opportunity in front of them, they descend into a series of overlapping, incomprehensible days of hallucinogenic drug consumption.

Stein's vision of Fear and Loathing was, by his own admission, inspired greatly by those infamous illustrations by the masterful Ralph Steadman. These are projected onto the stage in every scene, often bathed in striking, garish colours as the characters go through their disorientating trips. In turn, your eyes become fixated on a stage that expands upon itself. Endlessly inventive, the car that they drive into town is consistently transformed into a hotel reception, their suite and a schizo-cirque casino.

As this occurs, Thompson's inspired character sits at the sidelines at his animal skull lined desk, observing and narrating the entire affair. He pauses the stage, like the reference tape the novel was based on, and adds an affectingly brilliant monologue to the alluring events unfolding. It's surprising these interludes don't jar the production's ,

instead they add a dimension onto a scenario that is already brimming with great ideas. Every click of the cassette recorder and

The entire production is progressive thanks to its cast that take on several, diverse roles. Two stay in the same character's skin – Tom Moores and Bob Crouch, delivering impeccable lead performances as Raoul Duke and Dr Gonzo respectively. Crude dialogue spurts between them at a rapid speed and their chemistry is exceptional. As it moves along, the relentless pace of the production sometimes dives it into a dizzying, blurred state. It loses its footing, only slightly, yet always regains itself.

Hunter S. Thompson's story of excess and tacky opulence in the city of sin warrants the lurid, garish production Lou Stein has created. Enticing and offensively comical, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas is a sturdy piece of frenetic, hyperbolic theatre, and I mean that as an absolute compliment.

Our Rating:



[For tickets, head to the Fringe's Box Office Website](#)