

Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Party in the USA *****

Q: How many Manhattan financial professionals does it take to break the global economy?

A: You don't know, man. You weren't there.

When New York's JV Squad take to the stage at Underbelly Topside to begin Party in the USA, live drums kick in and snippets of Miley Cyrus's anthem drift in and out of focus. It's immediately clear this is going to be an acid trip of a show. Fortunately, there's plenty of Bud Light Lime (urgh!) to go round, and strudel in case we get the munchies.

Party in the USA aims to do no less than recreate 2008 New York, the causes and effects of the credit crunch, and the circumstances of Barack Obama's election. Like the city itself at the time, it's trippy. Time is bent and warped, nobody knows exactly what's going on, and we're all hanging on for dear life, hoping everything's going to turn out OK. We follow young Deutsche Bank intern Jeff and his friends as he takes acid for the first time in the penthouse of the Plaza Hotel, travels to an anarchist squat in Germany, then returns to Washington, D.C. hoping he'll be in time to save the world.

Like a psychedelic trip, Party in the USA teeters within touching distance of deep understanding and universal answers. But even with all the Russian literature degrees in the world, there's little we can do other than repeat, "Everything's going to be OK." And that's OK, too. That's how things did get fixed. Within hours of the capital spigots opening again, the bankers were flouting their own credit rules and everything was back to normal.

Party in the USA present a full range of characters with some of the best hair on the Fringe – hopeful, glib, aspirational, spacey, funny, and loving. But no easy answers. We're in the future now, and Congress's legislative fixes seem to demonstrate a misunderstanding of how early 21st century American capital works. But then, a substantial proportion of Manhattan's financial professionals don't get it either.

The JV Squad have the courage to follow all this through to its illogical, messy conclusion. Behind the raucous energy of this cleverly-scripted, inventively-designed and charmingly-acted production (as one of the characters would hope, it's a "matterful" show), there's an uneasy feeling that we could be in for another bad trip tomorrow.

But maybe everything will be OK.

Party in the USA is on at Underbelly Topside (Venue 300), 15:00, Aug 15-25.

Submitted by [Ricky Brown](#)

