

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 REVIEW: Paper Hearts *** (*;)



It is a precipitously balanced irony when you sub-title your independent bookshop based show 'A High Street Musical'. Not a setting to initially set the heart racing that is for sure. And most certainly, your potential audiences are going to appreciate the cheeky spin on the High School Musical franchise of wholesome, whiter than white toothed anodyne teenage yodellers.

But somehow, the Paper Hearts posse have just, just about got the measure of this and carry it off with, if not aplomb then an adroit sense of perspective and wry credibility. It is all jolly good tongue-in-cheek fun with that gung-ho spirit of, 'Hey! Why not let's do the show right here! It's just a matter of like totally believing in our selves and if we do. – woo, why can't everybody else?' Maybe a bit unfair but these kids certainly have an admirable spunky self confidence.

Stuck in a rut with his unfinished difficult first novel set in the post Revolutionary Russia, bookshop assistant, Atticus uses his somewhat two dimensional characters as surrogate alter egos. That is until Lily Sprocket arrives to put the cat amongst the pigeons with a threatened corporate buy out and no less a tremble in Atticus's once dormant trousers. To go any further in to this sometimes slightly unhinged libretto will be of little consequence either to avoid potential spoilers or to confuse the cast if they try to work it out themselves. Suffice to say, Paper Hearts is damnably good fun and no mean triumph of shoebox stage logistics with live musicians doubling up as characters. There is little at this preview

stage to trouble the West End or Broadway scheduling just yet but if you want to immerse yourselves for some eighty minutes in ridiculously innocent fantasy and love conquers all heroics this charming show presses all the right buttons.

[tweet_box design="default"]Aspiring young things will adore it, very much a three generation family show, you could even take the dog, he would find it a howl.[/tweet_box]

The climatic ensemble anthem is shamelessly adorable and you just cannot but love them for it. A High Street Musical – that has genuine Fringe sincerity written all over its beating heart.

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on#q=%22Paper%20Hearts%20the%20Musical%22>

<http://www.paperheartsmusical.com>