

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017 – The Girl Who Loved Stalin



Have you ever wanted to bang a dictator? Campfire Stories Theatre Company's bold Fringe debut is a lust-filled extravaganza about online dating, hopeless romanticism, sexual repression and the fall and decline of the Soviet Union in the late Cold War period.

A rough guide to romancing, wining, dining and wooing a communist dictator – whether they're the real thing or a curly-haired soldier with a self-esteem problem in a cheap costume. Four stories of unconventional romance in Soviet Russia. From a bawdy housewife to a sex-crazed German soldier, this is a coming of age story about loving your country – maybe a bit too much. Boris is a man whose love life has been about as successful as a North Korean missile system. He decides to sign up to a dating website called “The DickDater.com” which promises love, lust and laughs but finds himself dragged across the crumbling Soviet Union by a gay Ketamine dealer called Grigori who only became a matchmaker because he was promised £34 an hour. Will Boris ever meet his match? Is all love destined to fail? Will Communist rule in the Ukraine disintegrate? All questions “The Girl Who Loved Stalin” hopes to answer.

To premiere at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017, The Girl Who Loved Stalin pulls apart the modern perceptions of romance in an albeit roundabout way. The original script, written by Jake Mace, is blended with audience interaction and occasional improvisation alongside a biting satirical wit and many wild characters – all played by a cast of five. Under the swift co-

direction of Tapuwa Pswarayi and Mike Dorey, the show thrives with a lively atmosphere and aims to leave the audience writhing in laughter and somewhat existential self-doubt.

Inventively staged to be performed on a 4x2 metre stage, Technical Director Aden Craig evokes images of propaganda, the digital world and a cramped tech startup office through a blend of creative lighting, set and costumes ranging from old Red Army military jackets to a flaunty floral nightgown. The cast bring to life a myriad of interesting characters. Aditi Mohan debuts as Valeria, Boris' first match and a raunchy Stalin-obsessed socialite heiress. Livvie Newman bounds from her recent research project on sketch comedy in modern media to create Elena, a haughty Crimean housewife almost always on the brink of an erotic euphemism. Tapuwa Pswarayi glitters as the metrosexual Corporal and Father while Jake Mace puts together an eclectic and witty creation in sidekick Grigori. Mike Dorey (Hamlet, 2016, Discarded Nut Theatre, Theatre Royal Winchester) stars as the unfortunate Boris, a flailing, hopeless romantic whose *schadenfreude*-inducing performance.

All performed against the backdrop of a glittery curtain from Argos, this summer at TheSpace @ Jury's Inn, 3pm from 4<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> August 2017 (excl. Sundays) Tickets [here](#)