

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017 – REVIEW – The Offering (Guru Dakshina) \*\*\*\*

A curious boy, full of wonder, dreams of great warriors of the past and wants to be one of them. He meets up with an old man running from a difficult past. Fate has brought them together, and so emerges the complex and unique relationship between a guru (master) and his shishya (student). This is their story. Performer Aditya Roy has spent almost two decades exploring different forms of martial arts in search of the ultimate form of self-defence. He brings this and his work in theatre and music to create a spellbinding performance.

Aditya Roy works tirelessly over the course of forty-five minutes in [the Offering](#), which allows the audience to sit back and enjoy his skills and athleticism. The play, part of [the India@UK2017 season](#), is a mixture of dance, martial arts and traditional storytelling. Some would argue that the story is in part familiar – a student wanting to learn quickly from their master – but that is in part because this is a familiar trope throughout the history of storytelling and how young people live life.



This tale is much more though, about the role duty and humility play in an enlightened life. While you could see some similarities with the likes of Karate Kid in that the student learns skills through repetitive tasks, the play put me more in mind of [the Way of the Peaceful Warrior](#). The student is keen to learn from his master, as well as proving his worth.

Roy's movement is smooth and his training shows in the way he

makes it all look effortless. He manages to portray both roles easily; expressing the guru and student's differences by the way he holds himself and moves. At times, a subtle stamp of the foot is all it take to show the difference.

The production also shows how to make use of a blank and bare space. The stage only has five small musical instruments on it, plus a length of fabric used to portray a river. Between them and the woollen poncho Roy wears, the show allows us to see sword fights, climbing a tree in a crowded forest, the building of a shelter and confronting demons.

Roy's musical ability, especially the wooden flute-like wind instrument, is worth going to experience in itself. All the while, he performs balletic movements against sympathetic lighting plus an evocative and beautiful score. This is a tale well worth hearing and experiencing and is a thing of beauty.