

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017 REVIEW The Penelopiad*****

Having read the praise from others on social media, anticipation of this show by this Portsmouth all-female theatre group of 16-18 year olds was high.



I'm pleased to report the performance exceeded expectations.

Atwood's writing is, of course, quite brilliant, imagining the life of Penelope, while she has to live through her husband's decades away, as he sought to defeat Troy. She cleverly weaves in the plight of the slave maids, who suffer far more indignity than the privileged Penelope.

Exploring the trials and tribulations of living with demanding in-laws and later, a constant stream of boorish suitors aiming to claim Penelope as their own.

The polished performances of the girls, multiroling as both males and females, fully embrace Atwood's brilliance, making the piece their own.

Their ever-present and flexible prop – a rope – performs an impressive range of tasks – clipped diagonally across their bodies to depict them as male characters; the bow of a boat on their journey to Ithaca; the bounds of the marital bed – the list is near-endless.

Given the seriousness of some of the material, it's surprising, but gratifying that there's quite a few laughs in there too.

At the time of writing, you've only got one more chance to experience the show - 10.20am on Friday at Greenside

@Infirmary Street. Not only will you not regret it, but you'll be gathered up in the story and exit raving about it.