

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 – Valerie

Valerie – To All The Women Who Hold On For The Ones They Love

Valerie reaches deep into the guts of families and their mythologies and also honours all the women, down the generations, who have been strong for those they love.

It is a work of inter-generational cabaret theatre created by writer, composer and performer Robin Kelly that is inspired by his own grandmother's battle to support a troubled family.

This was a family where the seemingly joyous quirkiness of a grandfather who kept live canaries in his beard slid into despair and dislocation through the nearly overwhelming impact of severe mental illness. Kelly's grandmother Valerie was their bulwark.

The title role is taken by actor, guitarist and singer Cherie Moore who appears alongside Kelly and drummer Tom Broome. Together they intersperse the compelling narrative with a series of powerful blues-style songs.



Reviews for Valerie have been superb. It was chosen as a standout work of 2016 by the New Zealand Herald, which described it as “wonderfully intense and moving”. It was called a “close to a perfect piece of theatre” by Pantograph Punch, “an intensely intimate piece of ‘gig theatre’ ” by OnMagand “excellent, moving theatre, devised and performed with skill and a lot of heart” by Theatre Review.

Kelly says:“The show goes to some dark places. But it’s an exercise in not being afraid of those dark places too. I’ve written songs that explore the connection between experiences across generations. I’ve written some pretty brutal truths. But ultimately I think the show is about love. It’s a way of saying thank you to my grandmother and all those other women across the world who have struggled to keep their loved ones safe.”

The Fringe offers the first chance for audiences outside New Zealand to see Valerie which is directed by Benjamin Henson and presented by Last Tapes Theatre Company. The company has a long, successful track record (The Last Five Years, Verbatim, Earnest, Fallout: The Sinking of the Rainbow Warrior, Love and Information) and sums up its ethos as “theatre that gives a shit”.

- Venue: Summerhall, Cairns Lecture Theatre
- Dates: 3-26 August, preview 1 August
- Time: 21:15
- Duration: 65 mins
- Ticket prices: Full price £12, concessions £10, preview £5
- Box office: www.summerhall.co.uk/book-tickets/ and <https://tickets.edfringe.com>
- Valerie is written by Robin Kelly, composed and

performed by Robin Kelly, Tom Broome and Cherie Moore,
directed by Benjamin Henson and presented by Last Tapes
Theatre Company. See www.lasttapes.co.nz