

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 – Filth ****



I have to say I'm a big fan of Irvine Welsh. One of Scotland's most gifted and forthright authors, his renowned tomes *Trainspotting* and *Filth* were also huge hits when the film versions were made. So, when I got the opportunity to review *Filth* on stage at TheSpace UK's Perth Theatre in the Hilton Hotel on Edinburgh's North Bridge I jumped at the chance.

Let me tell you straight away – I'm glad I did.

Directed by Anna Marshall, Jake W Francis gives an outstanding performance, which depicts sleaze, sex, racism, power and the abuse of just about everything.

This one-man stage show follows the book more closely than the film version. 'Filth' follows the story of Detective Sergeant Bruce Robertson, as he directs his way through a stream of idiots, while trying to achieve a promotion and win back his wife and daughter. If only he can control his drug problem, the voices in his head, his utter contempt towards everyone around him, and the tapeworm that has an even bigger appetite than him.

If you've read the book, you'll know what to expect and Mr Francis certainly doesn't disappoint. The intimate venue of the Perth Theatre lent itself to an intense atmosphere. There weren't that many people in the audience – around 20 – but this was perhaps down to the first night and a plethora of other shows demanding people's attention.

Small in number his audience may have been, but Jake W Francis certainly engaged with each and every one of them. I was hooked on his every word and it felt like he was an old mate speaking to me in a pub (not that I know anyone in a senior position in Police Scotland. Honestly...) And without giving too much away, be prepared for an emotional finale.

As you would expect from any adaptation of an Irvine Welsh novel there is strong language throughout and it's not the sort of thing for those who are easily offended. But for sheer drama, passion and storytelling you'll be hard pressed to find anything better at this year's Fringe. And take note of the name Jake W Francis – here's someone whose huge acting talent will surely take him far.

Filth is on at theSpace at North Bridge, Perth Theatre until 18th August (not 12th) at 7.35pm. Tickets [here](#).

Edinburgh Reporter Review: ****