

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 – No Kids\*\*\*\*

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Pleasance Forth, until Aug 27

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The Bristol-based Ad Infinitum, led by co-artistic directors Nir Paldi and George Mann, aims to create provocative and inspiring sociopolitical theatre and its latest production is deeply personal, focusing on whether as a gay couple they should have a child.



It takes the form of a play within a play as they seek to examine the big decision from as many angles as possible, with the Israeli Paldi preferring to adopt and the Liverpudlian Mann demurring; and it is typically explosive.

They map out their imagined child's high-flying future, envisioning a dinner at Oxford University and a high-flying career as a diplomat, before veering into a nightmarish vision of Paldi minor turning into a psychopathic killer. They also look backwards at school-bullying and at the awkwardness of coming out to their parents. There's the practical angle of whether they would be acceptable adopters and the ecological angle: by not having a child, they would be looking at an annual saving of 58 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

There's angst and arguments, faux-fussing and fantasising and lots of imagined baby crying. And there's heaps of disco music, with the couple zipping round the stage and Paldi

hamming it up as a red-booted, black negligée-wearing Madonna in one outrageous number. Or was that as the priest?

It's a pacey, punchy production, with dollops of humour, mostly from Paldi, leavening the seriousness of it all. Perhaps if it gets a wider circulation the projected world population of 11 billion by the end of the century might be reduced. There again...