

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 REVIEW – Enough*****

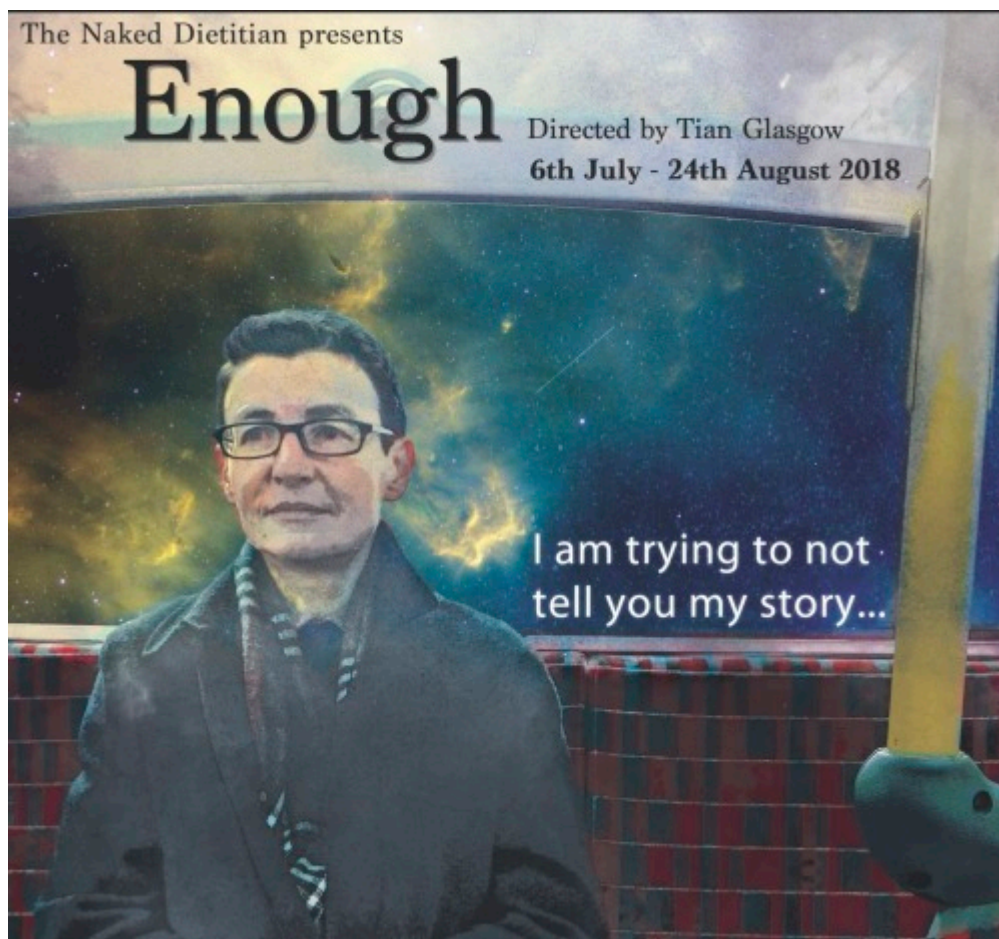
'Cut. Reset. Here begins the story of my body. Uncut version.'

Have you had enough?

Enough lunch? Enough sleep? Enough love? Are you good enough?

Or have you just had enough?

Lucy Aphramor (The Naked Dietitian)'s incisive new spoken word performance attacks this question from all sides. At last year's Fringe, in *Raise the Roof* (our review is [here](#)), Lucy investigated eating disorders, body image and fat-shaming as political and social statements with links to far wider issues. In *Enough* she widens her scope to include another desperate act of protest and self-harm: cutting.



And although Lucy has talked to a lot of people during the development of *Enough*, perhaps the most important person she has talked to has been herself. She has been there, and that's why she will never tell anyone else to 'get over themselves', and it is also why she is telling us her story;

'It's been a long flog making it safe to speak...The liberation of anyone is connected with my speaking up.'

In *Enough* Lucy bombards us with thunderclap words and lightning imagery. As she tears back the neoliberal veil hiding our tick-box treatment of mental health, the connections between 'psychological disorders' and our dysfunctional society are rendered razor-sharp clear. She shows us how sexism begins in early childhood ('to ensure conflict for future generations'), how racism is so embedded in our psyche that we don't even notice it, instead seeing ourselves as open-minded, thinking that it is we who have the right to dish out conditional acceptance. Anyone who does not fit in, for whatever reason – colour, sexual orientation, gender, age – is made aware that they are being, at best, generously tolerated, and most of the time not even that. 'Inequity and shame, not calories, are key vectors of illness.'

When people are stripped of their dignity, when control is taken away and they feel utterly powerless, their bodies are all they have left. Therapists often hear only what they've been trained to hear; they are complacent, dishing out useless, insulting 'remedies' designed to blame the victim, not find the cause.

'I am sick to death of your checklist ignorance.'

(As an independent dietician [she left the NHS after some years when she saw that prescribed 'treatments' just were not working] Lucy has developed her own **Well Now** approach, which has been adopted by the Highland Health Authority. It connects

and addresses self-care and social justice, because Lucy is firmly convinced you can't have one without the other.)

The NHS website describes self-harm as;

'A way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress....the intention is more often to punish themselves, express their distress, or relieve unbearable tension...(These) issues can lead to a build-up of intense feelings of anger, guilt, hopelessness and self-hatred.'

What we need to address, says Lucy, is why people feel like this. Why do they feel compelled to punish themselves? What is it they think they have failed at, and who or what made them feel like that? What makes them feel *not good enough*, and how is that message embedded in our society? We should not even need to ask why people feel angry and hopeless;

'Remember Grenfell'

Cutting brings its own huge bucketfuls of shame; arms are covered up, excuses invented;

'I am trying to tell you a story. I've been trying to not tell you my story.'

And like many others, Lucy doesn't just feel bad for having self-harmed; she feels worse for 'not doing it properly';

'I keep it skin deep...superficial...I'm too shallow. I am a lightweight in the self-harm department. I am in the place where shame claims me.'

Young people who self-harm should, she says, be asked – really asked – what haunts them. You can't do that in a 10 minute appointment, and if you think telling their parents to lock up the knives will work, you probably believe all anorexics need is a good dinner.

Performing for a gruelling hour with no notes and just one

little box of props, Lucy rams home the message; eating disorders, self-harm, body dysmorphia do not exist in a vacuum, they are a symptom of society's sickness, a sickness that preys on the marginalised, the excluded and the blamed. Self-harm, she says, is irrational, but at the same time completely rational when no other voice is left. People are disenfranchised;

'Remember Grenfell.'

'Stephen Lawrence would now be 43.'

Despite what you might think, this is not a depressing show – far from it. It is empowering, enlightening, incandescent. This is a woman who is on fire with rage, but also burns with determination, optimism, compassion and love. She even throws in some very funny jokes, *Enough* is a searingly honest work that is both deeply personal and profoundly political. It's a tour de force, a stunning piece of writing and performance. You'll come away exhausted; you'll come away immeasurably enriched and inspired. For as Lucy says;

'Shaking things up is the starting point for change.'

Enough, written and performed by Lucy Aphramor, directed by Tian Glasgow (New Slang Productions), is at the Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace (Venue 40) at 8pm every night until Friday 24 August. Tickets are available online [here](#), from Fringe Box Offices or on the door, subject to availability. Lucy is also performing *Raise the Roof* at the same venue at 11.45am daily until 24 August.

Lucy Aphramor's website (which covers both her work as a spoken word performer and her practice as a dietician) is <http://lucyaphramor.com/poet/>.