

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 REVIEW- Freeman \*\*\*\*

Freeman is a provocative collaboration between the writer Camilla Whitehill and the Strictly Arts theatre company. The performance casts light on six case studies, from different eras and perspectives. Through discussion of the impact of racism on mental health, the audience is compelled to respond to and not just bear witness to the effects of prejudice. It vehemently disrupts attitudes of passivity towards civil injustice, instead calling for a dialogue about ways to initiate change in communities.



The stage is set up as an adaptable space; one that is able to adjust seamlessly to stories which begin in the 19th century and transition back and forth to the modern era. It is used as a canvas from which to explore different art forms. Lighting is used in a way that is simultaneously elegant and a mode of

power; both the shadows and light are used to shape the performance and give it force.

The intelligence and versatility of the acting is revealed immediately. The genuine emotion within the actors, allows them to meaningfully inspire conversations about accountability and complicit figures in the upholding of prejudices. Dance is utilised as a medium which can convey a visceral form of violence, one that cannot be contained by words alone. The use of gospel music cut through the performance and offered an ethereal and haunting dimension. At times the break-down of the fourth wall, between the performance and audience, is disorientating but it is also necessary. In order for the play to inspire awareness in its audience, it must maintain an awareness of itself.



It is a play that self-consciously desires a reaction. It is difficult not to leave without a sense of this emotional struggle; one that is formed both from a sense of intense emotional heartbreak for the stories and lives lost and a

passionate rage against a racism which is built into social structures. This is a production which highlights a consistent oppression of the voices of the POC community and portrays how imposed voicelessness leads to the sacrifice of lives.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 27th August