

Review – Dark City – Will you face the fear? *****

By Robert Girvan

Murder, body-snatching, incest, bestiality, witchcraft, illicit trysts with the Deil himself and a modicum of social commentary – *Dark City* has it all!



Like Edinburgh's eminent surgeon, voracious cadaver addict and pillar of theoretical racism, Dr Knox, the play cracks open the capital city's sternum, lifts out its dark heart and makes some careful historic incisions.

In his 1891 novel *The Damned*, French writer Joris-Karl Huysmans described Edinburgh as the European centre for diabolism and the occult – it seems he may well have been onto something.

Taking in the city's facts and folklore around local entrepreneurs Burke and Hare, with their radical opt-in organ donation policy, and his satanic majesty Major Weir, *Dark City*

works to humanise the depraved and their victims, generally the poor, drunk, marginalised and dispossessed. The characters are all human cattle in their own way – cheap beef for science and the system. Are they fattened up on pure evil, black magic and covenants with the Devil or poverty, abuse and psychosis?

This new play by Mark Meiklejohn takes us on a fascinating journey of true horror and deprivation from the 17th century to the modern day, with an atmospheric setting, unsettling soundscape, suitably witchy folk music and nuanced performances.

I'll take you out with Major Weir's profound, poignant and uplifting final words before the garrotte and cleansing flame – 'I have lived as a beast, and I must die as a beast'.

That's the spirit.

Event: *Dark City* (theatre)

Times: Evenings 7.30pm, and Sat matinee:12.30 (1hr 40 min including interval)

Dates : Wed 21, Thu 22, Fri 23 Sat 24 November 2018

Venue: The Vault, Merchant Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2QD (off Candlemaker Row)

Tickets £10/8 www.talkingsheep.scot or text 07939 042 514 to reserve.