

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2019 REVIEW Hughie: Long days journey into dice ★★★★★

IT was great to see a Eugene O'Neill play at the Edinburgh Fringe. Brave to take on a play that has starred Jason Robards, Ben Gazzarra and Al Pacino but this play has the benefit of two outstanding performances.

Hughie is a short two-character play by Eugene O'Neill set in the lobby of a small hotel on a West Side street in midtown New York during the summer of 1928. The play is essentially a long monologue delivered by a small-time hustler named Erie Smith to the hotel's new night clerk Charlie Hughes, lamenting how Smith's luck has gone bad since the death of Hughie, Hughes' predecessor.

Firstly, Phil Nichol is a wonderful Erie, a lowlife gambler who has a low opinion of everyone and a high opinion of himself even though he is clearly tumbling down skid row.

You find yourself doing two things here. You admire Phil Nichol's stand out performance. Sure, it is a Eugene O'Neill play but Nichol really inhabits the character.

Many will know, Mike McShane from Whose Line Is it Anyway. His taciturn night clerk, Charlie Hughes says very little. McShane is so watchable as he watches and responds to Erie. You can read so much into him, even as he looks blankly at Erie.

We would highly recommend this as a fascinating piece of

theatre.