

Edinburgh Festival Fringe: Vanya is Alive

Vanya is Alive:

Five Stars



A POWERFUL new play from today's Russia brought to the Fringe by artists in exile due to their anti-war position.

A mother of a mobilised Russian soldier plunges into the abyss as she struggles to comb through state propaganda and lies.

What a tour de force by actor Nikolay Mualkov. In many ways, this is a man reading out a script and reading out all the speaking parts of the characters but it had such dramatic effect and was so well performed.

It added to the intensity and claustrophobia. Many of us started our literary lives with the first line of Kafka's The Trial and we haven't looked back.

This takes a touch of Kafka with a large helping of Doublespeak.

The growing confusion and isolation for Alya slowly intensifies. For us the tension is broken by the use of

humour. Biscuits come to mind.

This is a tragic tale. This is a modern tragic tale, told by Russian artists in exile in 2023.. Not 1933, not 1973.

We wish them all well and look forward to seeing more of their very important work.

Text – Natalia Lizorkina

Director, translator – Ivanka Polchenko

Cast – Nikolay Mulakov

Assistant director – Elena Gordienko