

Come To Where I'm From: Glasgow

Tron Theatre

Four playwrights reflect on the city that has shaped them.

★★★★

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MATTHEW KEELEY | 27 MAY 2017

Come to Where I'm From is a project birthed in 2010 by Paines Plough theatre company, inviting UK playwrights to write and perform mini-plays about the cities that have shaped them. Participating at the Tron Theatre are Gary McNair, Anita Vettesse, Martin O'Connor and Linda McLean, who each share with us their own unique perspective on Glasgow.

The staging is simple. In fact, there is no real staging. The writers simply sit in chairs and take turns reading their monologues from scripts. This may seem a little low-rent, but within minutes of McNair's enthusiastic opening piece, we know we are here to focus solely on the performers, their voices and their words. Nothing else is needed. McNair regales us with a story from his student years: a simple walk along Woodlands Road spun into a twenty-minute yarn. But it's more than simple narrative and wisecracks. He reflects on what it is to be Glaswegian and why simple observations of ordinary people in the street can tell us so much about the city's distinct temperament.

Anita Vettesse's reflections become more sensitive. As she looks back on childhood memories of her older sister and Italian parents, we are soothed and drawn in. Her writing is delicate, evocative and funny and her considered delivery has the audience captivated so fully we don't want the segment to end.

Following this, and jarring us with a completely different approach is the hilarious Martin O'Connor. He launches into a – surely meticulously-rehearsed – galloping stream-of-consciousness ramble about “his bit” – or rather not about his bit, since he doesn't tell people “where he's fae”. Of the four performers, O'Connor is the most confident in adopting a fabricated persona, hurling out colloquialisms and flippant quips about lies, truth, assumptions and losing his virginity in the woods – or was it in a van? – with either Morag or Tam, depending on who you ask. This is certainly the standout comedy piece of the evening.

Finally, Linda McLean slows down the pace for the finale, cooling the energy and revealing the most personal of the night's monologues. Rather than a physical place she's "from", McLean uses a day in her past that drastically altered her future, dividing her life into two distinct sections. It takes some time for her quieter delivery to recapture the audience, but once she reaches the hook of her confessional-style address, focusing on her son's debilitating condition, it becomes the most honest and touching of the production.

Each "play" will soon become available to stream on Paines Plough's free Come to Where I'm From app, and are absolutely worth spending time with, whether to be entertained, moved or taken off on four brief and perhaps nostalgic journeys throughout the city.