

## Theatre review: Do You Nomi?, Tron Theatre, Glasgow

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Published on Friday 22 February 2013 02:59

OF ALL the reasons why all-male casts still often feature on the British stage, the best one is this: the compelling need to explore the often half-told story of gay men and their culture, over 40 years of breathtaking change.

Star rating: \* \* \* \*

For a brief few years at the turn of the 1980s, the German-born singer and performance artist Klaus Nomi was the darling of the New York avant-garde, fusing rock, pop, punk and grand opera through his strange, powerful falsetto voice, and developing a unique personal style, featuring a white, mask-like face, and costumes that seemed half Berlin cabaret, half 1970s sci-fi. And although Nomi rarely identified himself as gay – he was more interested in ideas of the artificial and the post-human – he was part of New York's vibrant gay scene, in the years before the coming of Aids, and his own lonely death from the disease in 1983.

In this new 70-minute show co-created by choreographer Alan Greig and director Grant Smeaton, Nomi's story is told in a stark white box of a space by designer Veronica Rennie that reflects a part of the modernist aesthetic of the time, and brilliantly absorbs Hans Peter Janssen's washes of bright acid light and fierce abstract patterns.

The cast of four move with terrific intensity through a show that is part dance piece, part high-camp cabaret, part light-touch documentary. And if Do You Nomi? sometimes amounts to less than the sum of its carefully assembled parts, it is still a show of extraordinary, troubling vividness, featuring a beautiful, thought-provoking central performance from Drew Taylor as Nomi and a stunning playlist by composer Tom Murray, reflecting the strange and serious musical gift of an artist who refused to be bound by old divisions between popular culture and high art, and who insisted that the future we dread and dream of is already with us, now.