

Tron, Glasgow, Thu 29–Sat 31 May

REVIVAL

A good three decades have passed since the talking heads of the media first declared masculinity to be in crisis. If at times this idea has been overplayed, there can be little doubt that the role of men in our society has changed as women have adjusted their position in the social fabric.

Martin O'Connor, a young Glasgow artist still on the agile side of 30, has made the subject his own in his last couple of shows, but he feels that his vision has matured with this latest foray into the subject. Reality was the recipient of support from the Dewar Awards when it was first presented at the Arches some months ago, and this revival at the Tron looks set to bring the unique series of monologues to a broader audience.

'I started off with a couple of things about what is going on with guys these days,' O'Connor explains of his earlier work. 'I asked why things had changed – is it about unemployment, is it about feminism, and so on.'

In Reality he looks at three characters reflecting upon lives influenced by a mass media which affects men's self perception 'The first character is a kind of comedy character who really wants to be famous, he's desperate to make it in reality television,' he says. 'The second is dealing with his wife becoming famous while he's on tour as a soldier in Afghanistan. Then there's a computer gaming teenage father, who plays games that often represent wars. He has this uncle figure he looks up to. The uncle is a kind of role model, but all he talks about is shagging and getting in fights, and this young father feels that's what he ought to be doing.'

At the heart of the piece is O'Connor's desire to understand these characters without patronising them. Here the audience plays its own role. 'All these guys think they're really doing something, but the audience really know they aren't getting anywhere. We slag these guys off for wanting to do X-Factor, and slag them off for wanting to join the army – what kind of options have they got?'