

Theatre review: Inner Circle
Published Date: 26 May 2009
By Joyce McMillan
INNER CIRCLE ****

GLASGOW SUBWAY

THERE were street theatre artists cartwheeling at Partick, Claire Cunningham and Sharmanka rolling out their new show Sputnik and – courtesy of Rhymes With Purple Theatre Company – a man encountering Death in the rear carriage of the train that took me back to Queen Street.

Yup, it was Glasgow's Subway Festival on the underground, back for a bigger, better and more theatrical second edition after last year's success.

The most ambitious theatre offering this year was Martin O'Connor's Inner Circle, an intense and edgy 24-minute piece – adapted from Renato Gabrielli's Italian original, designed to fit one circuit of the subway, and performed in the rear carriage of a train with the help of a microphone and amplifier.

It tells of a man, an ordinary subway commuter, who knows he's going nowhere until a lost and distressed two-year-old boy catches his eye and forces him – just briefly – to confront his dangerous need for more life.

There's something about the loud, artificial sound that doesn't quite work; audience earphones might give a stronger sense of internal monologue. But O'Connor performs the piece beautifully, in a surprisingly disturbing event for such a light-hearted festival.