

Meka Mo: New York City Dreams



Sophie Layton (she/her)

“Cultural exchange makes you smarter”, & gives you a half-decent comedy show to boot.

In the damp darkness of Just The Tonic at The Caves, Meka Mo’s comic prowess goes global in this worldwide tour of her journey to new & foreign lands. Taking us on a journey from New York to West Virginia to India & back again, Mo’s comedy is as varied as the places we are guided through, whilst retaining a healthy dose of American sensibility.

Building in musical interludes, asides & the chance for audiences to explore some of the challenges one might face in a culture different from their own, Mo’s set flows well & rarely misses a beat, quickly pivoting from racism to bullying, profound moments & the ‘White Renaissance’, in an attempt to satisfyingly communicate their journey & the factors which played a role in assembling a set of this variety.

The overarching theme of racism & discrimination shines through the entire set. Whether referring to that imparted by Americans in the South, Italian Americans or even from the Japanese, Mo reflects on the seemingly culturally-based interpretations of racism, & in one case, how “when you’re being racist, you gotta bow with it”, something that many on the Right might just add to their playbook if they’re feeling spicy.

With the backdrop of the audience, & one particular member’s sheep-like laugh, Mo commands the room well, if subtly, with occasional quips just a little too quiet to be entirely audible. Given the size of the room, this is a particularly unusual feat but an achievement nonetheless at the Fringe. However, one less shining achievement is the use of an r-slug towards the end of the show, an inclusion that felt entirely unnecessary & detracted from the overall quality of the show; we all got it when you said ‘the r-word’, you didn’t have to go & say it!

Mo also does a good job at weaving in current affairs & cultural quips into the wider storyline, portending the need to stop “nerds” like Mark Zuckerberg, & the lost opportunity to have “bullied millennials when they were younger”. Her takes on a number of issues similar to this helps to place the overall set as a relevant take to be having now, something which likely would have been lost without this grounding influence.

Overall Mo’s show is a good attempt at a solid comedy set that tackles a variety of subjects whilst remaining grounded &, crucially, retaining some semblance of an overarching plot to tie it all together. Whilst some sections need refining, & others taking out entirely, it does a good job at being a decently entertaining way to spend an early afternoon, particularly as the show seems to have limited cut-through in the overall Fringe furor. Expect songs, travel, racism & more, & leave your preconceptions at the door, & it might be a set you end up enjoying (provided you’ve got nothing else to do).