Spare Room

★★★★

“I would definitely try to court her” and so much more, apparently, that won’t ever be out of my mind.

People passed out all around & calls for painkillers in the air, a night of revelry has clearly befallen our motley crew. But it’s where the plot of *Spare Room* goes from there that leaves it unbreakable mark on the audiences who bear witness. An incredibly powerful vignette of reality, a reality which occurs all too often in campuses around the country & world, this production speaks volumes about the culture in which young women are growing up in, & the mountain we still have to climb to ensure our own safety.

Brought to life by Blue Duck Theatre Company, & an incredible nine-person cast, *Spare Room* is a story that may feel all too-relatable, a perfect representation of the living room life of student houses everywhere. A clever set design maximised the permutations possible, giving each & every scene a new lease of life & complemented the spoken word well, accentuating rather than distracting attention. The static maintenance of various details served to give the play a timeless nature, with days & dates superfluous besides their relativity to one another, something which makes its final beats even more heart wrenching.

Whilst the entire cast gave fantastic performances, it was Luke Dyer’s Mary that particularly stole the show. His “sprinkling of autism” is often played for jokes & responsible for many of the comedic moments in the story, but the representation and matter-of-factness is a grounding influence as the tale progresses & serves an important motivational role for much of the conflict we come to observe.

Georgina Housby also deserves commendation for her incredible reprisal of Jodie, a complicated character whose development evokes the strongest emotions throughout. The focal point due to a twist of fate, her relatability & command of the audience, as well as the cast, allows the audience to build a significant rapport with her as the plot develops, a particular challenge in such a short run.

But where the play excels most is in its writing; an impactful narrative that continues to shock & awe, demonstrating the multi-faceted nature of characters that could have emerged to be one-dimensional. Housby and Sam Dinnage, another cast member, have truly crafted such a striking piece of theatre that is so slick in its execution & powerful in its content that it will be stuck in my mind for many years to come, particularly due to its impactful relevance.

I didn’t know what to expect from *Spare Room*, but being suitably shocked & speechless, I believe it has earned its place in the hearts & minds of all who bore witness. A heartbreaking & haunting exploration of self-destructive behaviour, ‘lad culture’ & the role of alcohol overconsumption, *Spare Room* is not a story; it is a

sobering insight into too many realities, & simply put, should be required viewing for everyone, everywhere.