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The Rose and Crown

August 25, 2016 | By [Hugh Simpson](#) | [Reply More](#)

★★★★☆ Mysterious

theSpace on Niddry Street (Venue 9) 23 – 27 August 2016
 Review by [Hugh Simpson](#)

Assiduously performed, and building up an air of mystery, *The Rose and Crown* has much about it that is striking

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bemoan the state of their lives – something they may have cause to regret once a mysterious stranger arrives.



Oliver Cookson, Hannah Bradley, Chris Bain, Hilary Davies, Beverly Wright and Charles Finnie. Photo Arbery Productions

A problem arises due to the piece's television origins, in that it largely features a group of people sitting in a public bar. Arbery Productions' version – essentially the Grads' offering from this year's SCDA competition – is given on a thrust stage. Actors remaining still with their backs to the audience cannot be avoided. This not only looks static and uncomfortable, but leads to the odd audibility problem.

Some wobbles in the accents also surface, but the standard of performance is high. Oliver Cookson's grumpy Mr Stone and Hilary Davies's Mrs Reed strike a suitably dour note. Chris Bain and Hannah Bradley convince as young couple the Randles, with Bradley's spot-on timing as Ivy adding a much needed note of humour.

Bev Wright does very well as the cantankerous Ma Peck, a role that seems to be the prototype for endless EastEnders matriarchs but discharged with style and life, while Charles Finnie's Harry is a complex characterisation. Oliver Trotter takes on the difficult role of the Stranger with an appropriately icy calmness.

prosaic

Martin Foreman's direction strives hard to overcome the problems of the acting space already mentioned, and largely does so. The mixing of the realistic and the mystical that features in much of Priestley's drama is well done – the problem lies in the original play. Like many mysterious pieces of drama, it carefully builds up an atmosphere that is always going to be lost when what is really going on is revealed.

An Inspector Calls, of course, solves this problem by leaving much unresolved. Here, the denouement is prosaic and even preachy, as if Priestley was lamenting how the togetherness that the War had forced on people had been replaced by bitterness and self-absorbed carping.

This, then, is no lost classic, but is certainly an intriguing if slight work, largely done justice by a committed cast.

Running time: 35 minutes

theSpace on Niddry St (Venue 9), Niddry Street, EH1 1TH

Tuesday 23 – Saturday 27 August 2016

Daily at 9.10 pm

Book tickets on the EdFringe website: <https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/rose-and-crown>

Company website: <http://www.arberyproductions.co.uk>

Twitter: [@roseandcrownedi](#)

Facebook: [TheRoseAndCrownFringe](#)

ENDS

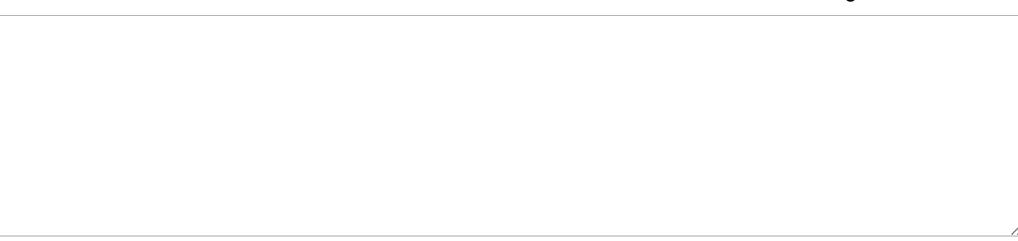
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ON THIS WEEK

Ending Sun 28 Jan

Assembly Roxy

[Elephants](#): Thurs – Sat.

Festival Theatre

[Miss Saigon](#): Wed – Sun.

Lyceum Theatre

[The Lover](#): Tue – Sat.

Rose Theatre

[Rabbie](#): Tue – Sat.

Summerhall

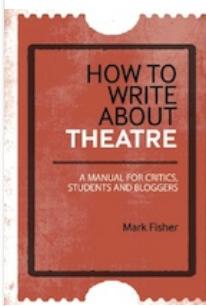
[Oor Rabbie](#): Thurs.

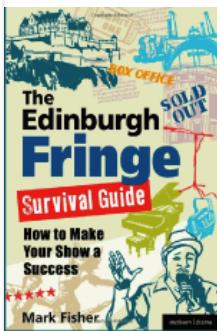
Trafalgar Lodge

[Malky](#): Sun 21.

Traverse

[Manipulate Festival](#): Sat 27 – Sat 3.



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