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## Tadzio Speaks..., Etcetera Theatre – Review

Author: Everything Theatre in Off West End, Reviews 10 November 2013 0 Comments 337 Views

**Written and directed by Martin Foreman**

★★★

**Pros:** Interesting concept and good storytelling. The short format is perfect for this solo performance.

**Cons:** The drama is based on a novella and without knowledge of the back story the audience may be underwhelmed by the plot.

**Our Verdict:** A tidy, short one man show, based on a novella written in 1912. The concept is thought provoking, though it could be a little braver. Entertaining lunchtime drama.



Credit: Tadziospeaks.co.uk

*Tadzio Speaks...* is a play based on the novella, *Death in Venice*, written by Thomas Mann in 1912. It is the tale of an older gentleman on holiday in Venice Lido, who is bewitched by a beautiful young boy and watches him from a distance in a voyeuristic fashion. In the original story, the boy, Tadzio, is merely a muse for exploring the thoughts and feelings of the older man. The fresh perspective of this production is that forty years later, Tadzio relates his experiences of that holiday and the profound impact the older gentleman has had on his life.

It is a clever concept, written with flair and empathy and there is plenty of weight in the subject matter. Tadzio explores his family relationships, his friendships and in particular his sexual awakening. The motivations of the older gentleman and the influence on the boy's sexuality are touched on, however they are discreetly skirted around and alluded to rather than confronted face on. I feel there could be a little more disclosure, and in doing so, more honesty to role of Tadzio. His innocence is appropriate as a young boy, but in recounting the story forty years later, the modesty steals a little depth and credibility from the character. There also does not appear to be any self awareness of the beauty and grace that Tadzio possesses, not much is made of it even though this is the lure drawing the older man's gaze. That said, there is clarity in the telling and it certainly leaves the audience with an uneasy understanding of the detached relationship between the boy and the man.

This is a one man show; the role of Tadzio is played with vigour and commitment by Christopher Peacock. Peacock is eloquent and colourful in his presentation and there is a passion infused in the performance. At times the emotion is a little over played, however, Peacock leaves no doubt about the enigmatic effect that this watcher has on Tadzio. The stage direction and lighting lend themselves very well to evoking the atmosphere and Peacock uses the stage to full effect.

The production is just forty five minutes long, perfect to fit into a lunch hour at 1pm. The Etcetera Theatre is conveniently located over the Oxford Arms pub, two minutes walk from Camden Tube. It's a small venue, and the staff are always upbeat and friendly. My only complaint is that the bench seating is narrow and could be a little more comfortable. Saying that, this production is not long and it's a really good way to switch off from work and while away a cold and rainy lunch break. Camden, and similarly Islington, is blessed with an abundance of pub theatres so it is worth keeping a look out for lunch time theatre breaks like *Tadzio Speaks...*

**Please feel free to leave your thoughts and opinions in the comments section below!**

*Tadzio Speaks...* runs at Etcetera Theatre until 15th November 2013.

Box office: 020 7482 4857 or book online at <http://www.etceteratheatre.com/index.php?id=2>

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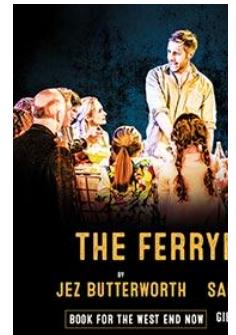
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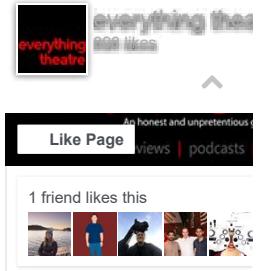
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