



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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VICIOUS CIRCLES

Weeping Spoon Stadium Tour

Tuxedo Cat @ The Wine Underground

Until Mar 16

Review by Tony Busch

This is not an easy gig. The script by Ben Kalman is challenging in its construction and the demands it places on its cast are huge. And while it may take some time to warm to this production, the quality of the performances make it well worth the effort. No wonder it won the Montreal 2012 Next Stage Award.

If you've ever wondered what it must have been like inside the punk rock scene of the 70s and 80s, this will give you a pretty fair idea. Sex, drugs, booze, jealousy, self-harm, self-loathing... it's all laid out before you like a putrefying smorgasbord.

The setting is the New York Chelsea Hotel room where Sid Vicious, of Sex Pistols fame, is staying with girlfriend 'Nauseating' Nancy Spungen, who was found stabbed to death beneath the bathroom sink.

The script whirls in a miasma of drug-fueled hallucination and reality as it presents the 'facts' from four different points of view – Sid's, Nancy's, Johnny Rotten's and manager Malcolm McLaren's.

Patrick Rogers does a wonderful turn as Sid Vicious, allowing the little boy inside to emerge occasionally from behind the violent rock persona. His vulnerability is pure pathos and his rage frightening.

Kathleen Aubert is his match as Nancy in what seems initially an underdone portrayal but one which gathers momentum. Her final justification is mesmerising.

Charles Mayer has possibly the hardest role as the sleezy agent/manager McLaren with little of the bravura writing of the other three characters, but perhaps lacks the character definition of his co-stars.

However it is Shane Adamczak who steals the show as Johnny Rotten. He has the wide-eyed stare, florid turns of phrase and vicious mood-swings so perfectly tuned it's like he's channelling.

The cramped performance space is both a boon and a burden, creating a claustrophobic environment well matched to the action but often causing sight-line problems and necessitating some awkward blocking.

This is a take-no-prisoners Fringe show that leaves you knowing you've seen something great and got your money's worth. Even if punk is not your cup of tea, this is pure entertainment.

Rating: 4.5 stars (out of 5)