
MISS BLOSSOM CALLAHANN

Bakehouse Theatre Company
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Review by Theresa Dolman

"Miss Blossom Callahann", by award winning writer and director Stephen House, was originally commissioned by the ABC Radio Drama Unit and produced by Radio National in 2004. But it also works well on the stage.

Blossom Callahann (Jacqy Phillips) is an aging, alcoholic, who is about to be evicted from her squalid apartment. Her acquaintances Max "The Cat" (Rory Walker) and Junk (Nathan O'Keefe) are a homeless petty thief, and a junkie.

The play opens as Blossom awakens. Max is asleep in her bed. She rises, puts on her make-up, and is ready to face a day full of possibilities. In reality, her "beautiful lace gown" is a tattered old rag covered in red wine.

Max wakes up, ready for his first drink and smoke. Blossom is enthusiastic about her new relationship with Max. Max considers whether living with Blossom might be more comfortable than squatting in the old printing factory.

Blossom's story comes together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Blossom remembers herself as a dancer and a singer. Max remembers her as "Candy" a prostitute, or maybe a stripper.

They are interrupted by the landlady Geraldine (Sheila Duncan), who has come to find out why Blossom has not yet vacated the apartment. During a scuffle, Geraldine is accidentally, but fatally, stabbed. Blossom and Max decide they can blame Junk. When Junk arrives, however, allegiances change and continue to change until the final twist.

Jacqy Phillips' portrayal of the eccentric Blossom was thoroughly convincing, as was Rory Walker's portrayal of the alcoholic Max, with his violent mood swings. Sheila Duncan also gave a good, if short-lived, performance as the harsh landlady. Sound and lighting added life to the sparse set. The blood effect was very effective, but it annoyed me that someone had obviously turned their wine into water.

This is a great show for those of you that prefer something a little darker and edgier.