

When One Door Closes

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Image by Dylan Evans.

What happens when you mash-up extreme acrobatic theatre with the three great heroines of twentieth century drama: Miss Julie, Hedda Gabler and Nora? In the progressive endeavour to challenge the boundaries of 'what is theatre,' La Boite opens its 2016 season with a daring collaboration with contemporary circus ensemble Circa, *When One Door Closes*.

This is a visceral, intense, unnerving yet comedic ninety minutes in the theatre, where words are only spoken through the bodies of seven extremely fit and flexy acrobats and circus artists (Nathan Boyle, Martin Evans, Nicole Faubert, Bridie Hooper, Todd Kilby, Brittannie Portelli, and Duncan West).

On a surface level, those patrons unfamiliar with the literary works will simply experience a great night. They'll be marveling at the physical prowess and cheeky comedy slipped in with lip-sync moments and handfuls of confetti to spread the love throughout the audience.

For those conversant with the theatrical classics, they will experience this show on a deeper level with a richer framework to view and understand the work.



Image by Dylan Evans.

Directed by Yaron Lifschitz & Libby McDonnell, with dramaturgy by Todd MacDonald, the work is framed by the gender politics of its fictional pioneers that challenged the roles of men and women in a male-dominated society. It seems appropriate that a circus ensemble is used to break conventions, and although some of the nuance and meaning is lost in translation in this unspoken theatrical piece, we are forced to use other senses and experience its meaning on a more physical, even sub-conscious level.

It must be a challenge to compose for something as abstract as a circus piece, but Oonagh Sherrard's soundscape helped to tell the story where words could not.



Image by Dylan Evans.

Utilising the unique characteristics of the La Boite Theatre space, the stage was set as theatre-in-the-round with a black sprung floor as the central piece. The costumes (designed by Libby McDonnell), had the boys in blue with sequined hotpants and the girls each representing a different colour, starting with full skirts, which were discarded when they got down to the

serious business of acrobatics, to reveal colour co-ordinated sequined hotpants – simple yet effective.

The only thing is that it felt a little long (at 80 minutes straight through), but I'm probably one of the few people that thought so – the audience on the whole was totally enthralled the entire way.

A jaw dropping, thrilling night at the theatre, *When One Door Closes* will play at La Boite's Roundhouse Theatre till April 23, including a 'meet the artists' night on April 13.