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Dispatches from The Fringe - Simple good fun, Singlehood is a delight

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Singlehood
Una McKeivitt

Singlehood

Rating: ★★★★★

Singlehood. Ten chairs. Eight performers. Two musicians. For seventy minutes they talk directly to the audience about the stigmas, prejudices, joys and pitfalls of being single. Internet dating, infidelity, marital breakdown, casual sex, relationships, love, loneliness, all the bases are covered. Throw in a few comic songs and there you have it. Simplicity itself. Simply marvelous. Simply charming. Simply enjoyable.

Singlehood humorously recounts a host of stories and insights that revolve around the experiences of people who have never been in a relationship, just come out of a relationship, want a relationship, don't want a relationship or don't know if they want a relationship. Developed in the Fringe Lab and work shopped repeatedly, originator and director Una McKeivitt built on her earlier success with a smaller version of *Singlehood* at The Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, by

enlisting the talents of collaborator David Coffey and producer Rachel Murray.

Now with a cast of eight, it was difficult at times to tell which were the actors and which the non-professional performers. Each spoke directly to the audience with an engaging ease and casual confidence that drew you intimately into their worlds, a feat for which McKeivitt deserves huge credit. Worlds where men professing to be six foot four turn out to be five foot six, where rampant chicken pox is no barrier to casual sex, where break ups can take years to get over and telling someone you don't want to have sex with them may not be as endearing as you think. Using a minimal set, basic lighting, no overarching story and some cast members with little experience took great courage and even greater skill to pull off. But McKeivitt succeeds in doing so with consummate style.

Comic numbers by musical comedy duo, The Guilty Folk brought an added quirkiness to *Singlehood*. Songs like Woke Up Beautiful went beyond being merely good fun and touched on some more delicate themes. But the stand out number, AWLF, was a laugh out loud crowd pleaser. But you'll have to go listen for yourself if you want to find out exactly what an AWLF is.

Singlehood doesn't do deep or serious, but its final image as the singletons leave the stage suggests one of the powerful attractions of the single condition. Here we glimpse something of the often deep and abiding friendships that can exist, the joy and togetherness shared by those who are waiting for, or prefer to live without, that special someone.

Singlehood may be the theatrical equivalent of a chick flick at times, but for the male of the species it can offer something of a guilty pleasure. But whatever the gender, *Singlehood* is a seriously funny, incredibly engaging and a delightfully entertaining must see show whose simplicity disguises the depth of theatrical know how behind it.

Singlehood runs at The Project Arts Centre –Upstairs, until September 22nd. Doors open 6.30 p.m., with an extra performance on September 22nd at 4.00p.m. Tickets are €16.00



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