

[AXS ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [PERFORMING ARTS](#)

Dispatches from the Fringe: the perfectly imperfect clash in 'Love+'

September 16, 2015

9:45 AM MST



Love+ by Claire O'Reilly

Photo by Molly O'Cathain used by kind permission of Tiger Dublin Fringe

Love+ by Claire O'Reilly

Rating: ★★★★★

Perfection is found to be less than perfect in "Love+" where a female robot proves to be perfect in every way except the ways that matter. An automatic lover to meet your every need, she constantly readapts to anticipate and respond to your every whim. Giving you the perfect compliment, upgrading your online porn choices without judgement or shaving your legs, her goal is always your happiness. But she cannot reciprocate desire, cannot care, cannot feel aroused and cannot love. In "Love+" director Claire O'Reilly offers a clever, funny and thoughtful investigation into the nature of being human and of human relationships when woman meets machine and sparks fly.

"Love+" devised by Claire O'Reilly, Breffni Holahan, Maeve O'Mahony and Dylan Coburn Gray

follows a woman and her female robot who pours her wine, peels her satsumas, duets with her to Abba songs and takes her to bed. In between they argue, or more precisely she argues with the robot, wanting it love and be capable of being loved. Movie references of the romantic and robotic reinforce this central conflict as it becomes clearer the woman needs to ask some questions of herself. While the relationship is always engaging "Love+" strained a little at times as the human constantly argues for the robot to be what it can never be, give what it can never give, want when it can never want. Granted, trying to change your partner is often at work in many relationships, but as "Love+"s central focus it risked weakening the pulse at the heart of the story, rendering it little more than a vehicle to facilitate "Love+"s abstract musings. But thankfully this is avoided by some clever writing and two wonderful performances awash with chemistry.

Breffni Holahan exquisitely embodied her programmed to please robot and was wonderfully engaging. Maeve O'Mahony as a woman who gets all her needs met yet is still desperate for love, both to have and to give, was also compelling, negotiating the difficulty of convincingly conveying the near impossible position of wanting a robot to care. Human meets the robotic in an angular, grey and white set design by Molly O'Cathain, which featured an array of square boxes and an elevated bed, with the boxes cleverly used to create a variety of spaces. O'Cathain's well balanced set bordered on the clinical, but was carefully softened by an array of pillows and a bowl of satsumas which hinted at some human warmth. The hanging lightshades proved problematic though, blocking the screen to the rear of the stage for a significant number of the audience. Pacing was sharp, with the central story interrupted with some clever asides, projections and lip synching, all of which director Claire O'Reilly ensured were weaved together seamlessly.

In "Love+" our programming as human beings and the nature of our relationships is called into question. What exactly is human nature? Do we have a soul? How can we accept what we really think we want if when we get it it's all pretend? Is an approximation of a relationship enough? For a perfectly imperfect robot it is. Humans are a little more complicated it seems. Wildly interesting, full of contradictory impulses, with countless questions on what makes us who and what we are, we're funny, thoughtful and infinitely engaging. As is "Love+"

"Love+" runs at the [Project Arts Centre](#) as part of the Tiger Dublin Fringe till September 17th.

Show begins at 7.15 pm

Tickets: €15/€13

For further information visit [Project Arts Centre](#) or [Tiger Dublin Fringe](#)



Chris O'Rourke
Tulsa Theater Examiner

© 2006-2015 AXS Digital Group LLC d/b/a Examiner.com