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# Dispatches from The Fringe- White Rabbit, Red Rabbit, Russian Roulette

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Nassim Soleimanpour's White Rabbit, Red Rabbit  
*White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*

## Nassim Soleimanpour's White Rabbit, Red Rabbit

Rating: ★★★★★

A large, brown envelope. Two glasses of water. A vial. Inside the envelope is a script. The actor taking the stage is receiving this script for the first time. Given very little notice and minimum information, the actor must perform the script without any preparation, set or director. In Nassim Soleimanpour's *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*, theatre, text and performer are stripped down to the bone in this riveting theatrical experiment where the stakes couldn't possibly be higher.

*White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* plays like a Brechtian allegory, cutting at the heart of what it means to be present and alive in a space you cannot inhabit. Alienation effect and meta-theatre loom large, with the strongest presence belonging to the absent author. Alive, or possibly dead, Soleimanpour, through his text, directs the actor who directs the audience. Using a different actor for every performance, which in the case of this performance was played with compelling strength and

sensitivity by the excellent Olwen Fouéré, the actor lends the text a body, cold reading pages as they, and the audience, undertake a journey of discovery.

Would you risk your life for your art? In *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*, this isn't a rhetorical question: it has palpable weight and significance. Denied a passport for refusing to join the Iranian Military, Nassim Soleimanpour's is currently forbidden from leaving his home country of Iran. Exiled at home, Soleimanpour refuses to be held captive. If his body can't travel, his mind will. As will his imagination, his ideas and, most powerfully, his words. Those who have come to view the text as an anachronism superfluous to a modern theatre would do well to see *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*. Here words carry power, ideas and the presence of a truly gifted, theatre practitioner for whom the act of writing is an act of freedom, defiance and questioning. If the past makes the future, how much of what we do is choice, conditioning or conformism? And what price are we prepared to pay in order to conform or be free?

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, the mind sharper and the imagination wander in Nassim Soleimanpour's sublime *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*, which has the power to take us to scary places, dreadful places, places both funny and touching and all too painfully human. For if *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* is a gun, we are the bullets in this inventive, theatrical experiment that holds up a mirror to the human condition. If you see no other show, go see *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*.

*White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* runs at The [New Theatre](#) daily till September 22nd. Doors open at 1.00 p.m. Tickets are €10.00. Forthcoming performances will feature Peter Daly, Natalie Radmall Quirke, Shane Byrne, Ciaran O'Brien, Gina Moxley, Hilary O'Shaughnessy, Amy Conroy and comedienne Maeve Higgins.



**Chris O'Rourke**  
Tulsa Theater Examiner

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