
AXS ENTERTAINMENT / ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT / PERFORMING ARTS

Dispatches from the Fringe: sins of "The Auld Fella"

September 10, 2015

8:59 PM MST



Photo by Cliona Ni Laoi used with kind permission of Tiger Dublin Fringe

The Auld Fella by Michael Glenn Murphy

Rating: ★★★★★

"The Auld Fella, by Michael Glenn Murphy offers a journey through Dublin of the rare old times as we follow the strained relationship between a female impersonator and his young son from the twilight of the Theatre Royal through to the mid-Seventies. Overbearing and overpowering, Murphy's self-righteous father takes no back chat, no language and makes no connection with his troubled son. Instead he wallows in tales of pros like Judy Garland and James Cagney, and semi pro's like Roy Rogers so he can avoid the hard realities and responsibilities of family even as his health fades. Moving from the Theatre Royal to Inverness to a retirement home, "The Auld Fella" has some wonderful moments. But like its troubled son it never really escapes the endless demands of its all-consuming father.

Directed by Karl Quinn, "The Auld Fella" is something of a mixed bag. Theatrically, Quinn makes

some clever choices, with a hat rack and small jacket employed to simple but clever effect. Dramatically things were less successful, due in no small measure to a fundamental difficulty with the script. As it stands "The Auld Fella" sits uneasily between being an engaging two hander, though three hander technically, and a one man show. A father and son story, it often seemed as if only the father's story mattered. Murphy's central character simply overwhelms everything and everyone. As does Murphy's performance, which though utterly compelling at times, making us warm to an often unlikeable character, simply left little room for anything else. Which is not to suggest that Craig Connolly as the frustrated son negotiating the sins of the father was anything less than engaging. Indeed Connolly squeezed everything possible from the limited options available to him, leaving you wishing you could have had more.

Produced as part of "A Show In A Bag Productions" for the Tiger Dublin Fringe "The Auld Fella" is a deeply personal, labour of love for Murphy and his passion shines through despite this production's many difficulties. One senses there is a heartfelt story wanting to be told here. One can only hope that Murphy will revisit, rewrite and fully reveal the father and son story he yearns to tell.

"The Auld Fella" by Michael Glenn Murphy runs at Bewley's Cafe Theatre @ Powerscourt as part of the Tiger Dublin Fringe till September 17th.

Tickets: €13.00

For times and further information go to the [Tiger Dublin Fringe](#)



Chris O'Rourke
Tulsa Theater Examiner

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