

REVIEWS OF *FEN*

Chicago Sun Times: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2023/2/20/23606807/fen-review-court-theatre-caryl-churchill>

“Thanks to a stellar production from Vanessa Stalling, directing a crazy-good cast, this 40-year-old play comes across as strikingly contemporary in its aesthetics and surprisingly relatable in its milieu.”

Chicago Theatre Review: <https://www.chicagotheatrereview.com/2023/02/the-incessant-dirt-and-dust/>

“Each of the six actors in this production are incredibly and equally fantastic.”

Chicago Tribune: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/theater/reviews/ct-ent-fen-court-theatre-review-20230221-yfkff5zdhrh7vopzzvtz5gk4pi-story.html>

“...in a multicharacter cast that includes Elizabeth Laidlaw, Lizzie Bourne, Cruz Gonzalez-Cadel, Morgan Lavenstein, Genevieve VenJohnson and Alex Godrich, there is a formidable ensemble of talent”

REVIEWS OF THE GLORIOUS DAMNATION OF EDDIE SMALL:

Ed Fringe:



Rowena Henley

at 08:17 on 20th Aug 2015



0 AGREES

0 DISAGREES

Eddie Small is a boy with big dreams. Though lacking in any kind of conscientious determination, he sees himself as future of bluegrass music, the ‘King of the South’. Zut Alors’ musical follows the story of a character who decides to take the easy way out, making a Faustian-esque pact with a country western Mephisto. Eddie gets the fame and fortune he had always wanted (though never worked for), but slowly realises that the sacrifices he made were in no way worth it.

The Glorious Damnation Of Eddie Small is consistently engaging. The story has an interesting edge, taking a traditional tale and transforming it into a relevant rendition. The style of the piece was certainly unique: the ensemble work as both our narrators and our characters. The breach of the fourth wall felt a little uncomfortable at first, as it was difficult to know where we stood as spectators and how this technique would work within the piece as a whole. However, the audience engagement became more relevant and more helpful as the piece progressed. Without this narration, life may have been a little difficult. At points, the performance was a little difficult to work out and there seemed to be discrepancies in terms of plot development.

The acting was admirably impressive throughout and every actor within the company should be congratulated for their contribution. The cast had a great chemistry, working well to create settings and atmosphere simply through their ability to adapt to different scenes cohesively. Lizzie Bourne, playing Eddie’s manager Jo, was the stand out performer of the evening. Bourne had a type of naturalism that would not be out of place on a West End stage and was completely convincing in her role as the ambitious, and somewhat obsessive, managerial role.

The most impressive element of the evening, however, was most certainly the singing and instrumentals, carried out impeccably by each cast member. I genuinely enjoyed every single song during *The Glorious Damnation Of Eddie Small*. They captured the gritty passion of bluegrass, whilst still allowing it to be appropriate for the type of audience one might find at a musical theatre performance. The ability of each performer, especially those on guitar, was truly astounding and the melodic interludes they provided worked very effectively to break up the narrative and interject the piece with an infectious sense of soul.

The Glorious Damnation Of Eddie Small is a production you will find hard not to enjoy. Though more could have been done in terms of character development and plot consistency, the show was entertaining from start to finish and well worth a watch this Fringe.

ED FRINGE REVIEW

[Flo Layer](#)

at 10:43 on 20th Aug 2015



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Zut Alors Theatre's new and original bluegrass musical traces the tale of down-and-out Eddie Small, who jumps at the chance to make a pact with the devil in a last bid to become a world-famous bluegrass musician.

Despite its fairly clichéd Faustian plot this show has a refreshing and brilliant take on the traditional musical form. Inspired by the sounds of bluegrass, this show delivers one finger-snapping number to the next in quick time.

There was a fairly unusual and slightly awkward opening to the show; the audience entered to music played by the cast on stage, who informed us "We had to write a lot of songs for this show, and this is one of our favourites." I felt a little as if I had intruded on a group singalong and when the narrators started addressing the audience directly it all felt a little too familiar. Sometimes it's nice to hide behind the fourth wall!

Yet this awkwardness gradually dissipated throughout the performance; clearly the cast had a lot of fun preparing for this show, and their enjoyment seeped into their performance. Their enthusiasm was infectious and made for an enjoyable show.

Sam O'Hanlon starred as Eddie and he carried the dark and troubled character very well. It helped of course that his guitar playing and showmanship was excellent. **Yet Lizzie Bourne deserves special mention for her incredibly convincing portrayal of Eddie's manager Jo, a versatile and highly-strung character.** There were also some brilliant interactions between characters. An incredibly awkward date was strung out with careful and excruciating timing, and Eloise Kay performed the shy and endearing sister with elegance.

Every cast member could sing and play with impressive confidence. It was a special moment when Connor Arnold whipped out a banjo at the back of the stage; this is a musical with a refreshing take on talented onstage musical production.

Designer Anna Driftmier should also be congratulated for an inspiring stripped-back set. The wooden aesthetic really worked well, and for a Fringe show this sort of quality is really great to see.

Personally I can't admit to being a huge Bluegrass fan, yet in this show James Macdonald and Dan Glover have composed some absolutely brilliant songs that are bound to leave you with a swing in your step for a little while afterwards. Perhaps the venue had fairly damp acoustics, or it might have been owed to the acoustic set, but occasionally the actors' voices were lowered to a barely audible level which was a shame.

The Glorious Damnation of Eddie Small is a truly refreshing new musical and it is definitely worth taking an hour of your time to sit back and enjoy the bluegrass brilliance.