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Sneasons of Liz, New Town Theatre PassionFlower, New Town Theatre Pink Noise by Fork, Assembly George Square



rob adams
Folk & Jazz critic

Quite apart from recreating pop hits in every sonic detail with their mouth music, Fork could be Finland's answer to Abba.

Except, the blond flowing locks here belong to a bloke who does a mean line in knowingly preposterous posturing and his dark-haired partner is wearing a wig under which sits a dome that, he concedes, takes copious towelling.

Such self-effacing features take a moment or three to materialise but once they do and with the women in the quartet revealing cartoon-like personalities as Madame Whiplash and Stevie Nicks in black leather, Fork present a show that's as entertaining as it is technically impressive. The band on location, wheat fields and seashore film that runs while they perform Hello offstage and prepare for their Hammer House of Carry On-style Michael Jackson sequence is a hoot and their Black-Sabbath-Led Zeppelin medley, complete with "guitar" solos, is as much heavy mirthful as [heavy metal](#).

Add a really well-worked and faithful Bohemian Rhapsody, physical movement that's as tightly executed as their multiple function vocal parts and audience participation that's mild by most standards, and you have possibly the top a cappella turn on the Fringe.

Becc Sanderson's determination to compile a show, PassionFlower, full of songs that have flowers in their titles has taken her on a journey through musical genres and eras that range through the late-night, 52nd Street jazz haze of Billy Strayhorn's title track and Piaf's sophisticated Parisian chansons through to Tom Waits' junkyard blues, Elvis Costello's brittle angst, the White Stripes' grungy urgency and Radiohead's aching languor.

And allowing for occasional awkward or self-consciously stagey moments, she carries it off well, singing clearly and sensitively or raucously as required to the accompaniment of her husband, Chris Greive on trombone, melodica and foot operated tambourine and the ever-resourceful Graeme Stephen on no end of [guitar styles](#). A 10pm slot that's worth checking out.

The box of tissues is a much-used prop in Liz Merendino's Sneasons of Liz. Merendino has allergies and a mother from Da Broinx with homespun Jewish cures who might have driven her away long before Merendino decides to confront her travel phobia. In Venezuela she becomes allergic to a lover who vanishes when his wife goes into labour. In London she gets the blues and sings a rather fine Stormy Monday and in Japan she's cured by sex and sushi until a love cheat sends her home to mamma.

This is a well-written and well performed piece with good musical illustrations from Merendino and her pianist-cum-foil, including an Everything Happens to Me reconfigured for the laptop age, and although I'm not sure it's quite as funny as the couple behind me seemed to find it, it has more than its [fair share](#) of entertaining observations.

Performances until August 28

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