

Theatre review: Suspicious Minds ***

THE GRV, EDINBURGH

AN ENJOYABLE if uneven piece of new writing by Caroline Dunford, performed by Edinburgh-based theatre company Siege Perilous, *Suspicious Minds* employs elements of a murder mystery to take a somewhat fatalist view of how our identities are shaped.

John (Allen Scott-Douglas) is a fun-loving Elvis Presley obsessive who's graduated from playground thuggery to enforcement and ultimately partnership in his persuasive friend Dave's electrical shop, a barely concealed front for their drug-dealing business. Forever cheating on his school sweetheart, the sexually precocious Fiona (Ruth Tapp), who once extended her affections to Dave (Colin Little) too, John is never happier than when chasing girls at the Graceland bar or reminiscing about his hero. Completing the cast is buttoned-down Tim (Bill Addison), a well-meaning tax inspector hiding a dark secret.

Enveloped by the audience on three sides and enlivened by Scott-Douglas' occasional but full-throated bursts into Elvis numbers, there's an energy to the play that compensates for its sometimes clunky plotting and clumsy character exposition, random parlour-game episodes serving as a bolted-on means of reaffirming personality traits. Nevertheless, Little brings a restrained menace to his part and Addison is well cast as the mouse bottling up his agitation and resentment. The denouement, when it arrives, manages to be as tragi-farcical as the King's own sadly pathetic demise. Given all the expression of sex, violence and rock'n'roll, the feeling of lives caught in a trap remains unconvincing, however.

Jay Richardson, *The Scotsman*

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