

## **‘Too Long The Heart’ by David Hutchison ★★★**

ANOTHER back room in Leith, another play in which two angry people and one innocent hold a member of the British boss-class hostage.

This time, though, we’re watching not Gagarin Way, but a new 75-minute play by leading Glasgow-based academic David Hutchison, staged by Andy Corelli’s increasingly ambitious Siege Perilous company.

Too Long The Heart takes its title from WB Yeats’s great poem Easter 1916, which suggests that “too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart”; and it’s set in an anonymous room near Cork, where two young members of a Continuing IRA group – and, eventually, their senior commander, Brady – are holding a former British Army officer.

The play’s main problem is that it seems to belong, emotionally and dramatically, to an earlier phase of Irish history. Hutchison recognises in his dialogue that things have moved on, but then creates a dramatic structure that simply iterates the intransigent hatreds of a generation ago.

His portrait of the republican zealots is so unpleasant that the British ex-officer seems like a model of reason by comparison; and although there’s a brief glimpse of an emerging debate on how Scottish independence might impact on Ireland, the theme is not developed.

# SIEGE PERILOUS

The play, though, is performed with impressive skill and intensity by Andy Corelli's company, featuring Corelli himself, Ian Sexon, Des O'Gorman and a fiercely impressive Clare Ross as Caitlin, the deeply damaged girl at the centre of the drama, for whom nothing has moved on since the day her brother died, and whose heart is truly as hard as stone.

**Joyce McMillan "The Scotsman" 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013**