

'Turning to the Camera' by Simon Jackson ☆☆☆

THERE ARE plenty of things you might expect, on a visit to Edinburgh's giant Ocean Terminal shopping mall; a bite to eat in the food court, maybe, or a stroll round the Royal Yacht Britannia, one of the most intriguing tourist destinations in town. What you don't expect is to be hustled into a vacant shop-front (of which there are plenty, in these recession-hit times) and treated to a 70-minute live theatre heist movie, in which four actors – backed by vivid film and still photography – play out the tale of one Ian Thompson, a freelance photographer in London whose photo-opportunity with a curvaceous junior celebrity is interrupted, when he witnesses a man being pushed to his death from nearby balcony.

Or at least, that's what seems to have happened; because if there is one weakness in Simon Jackson's determinedly genre-bound script, it's that it features one of those final narrative twists that retrospectively undermines the entire plot. Andy Corelli's Siege Perilous company give the story hell, though, in a series of entertaining chase-scenes across London – amusingly illustrated by film of downtown Leith – and bruising encounters between Ian and his adversaries, played with terrific flair by Ian Saxon, Adam Tomkins, Lewis Hart and Adrienne Zitt. And if the play finally scuppers its own chances of saying something timely and significant about the tabloid culture in which it seems to be set, it plays a magnificent role in highlighting the potential of some of the discarded urban spaces of our time; as the audience emerge blinking from their bleak, atmospheric concrete cave, into the Christmas lights of the mall.

Joyce McMillan; "The Scotsman"

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