



Edinburgh Interview: Katie Reddin-Clancy on Grace

By Theatre Weekly - July 19, 2018



Fresh back from highly successful runs at the Adelaide Fringe Festival and Melbourne International Comedy Festival, British comedy actress Katie Reddin-Clancy makes her debut at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival with her self-written, second, solo theatre production 'Grace'.

Grace is coming to Gilded Balloon what can you tell us about it?

Grace is my second solo theatre show. It's about Alfie, the male half of a comedy double act, who re-enters the stage as Zora, a woman. Zora battles stage fright so Alfie plays characters they met on the road until she's ready.

I've been on tour to develop the show in Australia at Adelaide Fringe and Melbourne Comedy Festival, which was an incredible experience. It turned into a funny rollercoaster through show business, spirituality, identity, love and, was called "an important statement about gender and performance." I think that sums it up pretty well. Mind you, I'm on version 75 of the script now so it's constantly evolving. Hopefully we've created a show about a serious topic but with funny bones. It's in the theatre category but

there's also, character comedy, stand up, some performance arty stuff and even a musical element. Something for everyone...we hope. You be the judge!

How does it feel to be at Gilded Balloon?

Really incredible. It's such a legendary venue with such a fab, experienced team and also, let's be honest, the Teviot basically looks like Hogwarts, so... prepare the Nimbus 2000.

I was invited up as they had a cancellation, so it was a big decision I had to make overnight...but there was only one real answer.

I have performed in The Teviot once before in 2014 having won my London heat and been sent up to Edinburgh for the semi-finals of the new comedian competition – 'So you Think You're Funny'. So much has happened since then so I'm excited to jump in at the deep end with a show for the whole run. I remember seeing about seven shows a day as a punter in 2014 and was blown away by all the talent, so I'm really honoured to be part of it in 2018.

What's the most challenging thing about performing in Grace?

The main challenge was getting the story clear as it's quite a complex concept. Now that's hopefully down, the challenge is to allow all the character's room to grow, for the story to flourish and hopefully land an entertaining and important story in the landscape of Edinburgh Fringe 2018.

What inspired you to write Grace?

The history and detail of trans, non-binary and intersex journeys was brought to my attention by my friend Ela Xora. I thought the Artist's life was tough but my mind was blown when thinking about: what if you felt in the wrong body or your gender had been chosen by a Dr, or actually you felt in the middle and wanted to embrace both. Ela Xora's artwork is truly inspirational and I'm fascinated with her film collaborations with Stephen Fry in, 'The Mask Of Intersex' and now, 'Ponyboi' by director River Gallo on his intersex journey. It's coproduced by Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson! Not bad for a student film.

How did you research the subject?

I did my first solo theatre show, 'Kate Middleton Show Queen' in Australia in 2013. It was all about being Kate Middleton's look alike. I played a character who was exploring her gender that felt like she had a lot to say. She was inspired by my friend who came out as transgender so I chatted to my friend and felt like I really wanted to help if I could. I was thrilled to find Stonewall's campaign, 'Stand up for LGBT and be an amazing ally'.

I then did a serious amount of research. The theatre company Milk Presents was a real find. 'Bullish' and their drag king show, 'Joan'. I'm honoured to work on my male character with their drag king extraordinaire: Lucy Jane Parkinson.

I've met some amazing people and been very grateful for them sharing their stories and feelings. For example, my tech in Brighton Fringe was gender fluid –a god send!

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Why should people come see Grace?

The show addresses the gender revolution and the shift to a wave of Entrepreneurialism.

The main character is gender fluid, choosing to embrace both the female and the male sides of themselves as one. There seems to be a fantastic increased awareness of the spectrum of gender – the advertising and fashion industry developing gender neutral campaigns, artwork, films, television programmes and, thankfully, even the law with same sex marriage. A debate we shouldn't have to have had but a fantastic result.

I also explore performance as the show has been my business venture for the last few years as I produce it, write and perform it. So, I've included the craziness of that!

*Grace is at **Gilded Balloon** 1st – 27th August (not 13th)*