

Theatre with Susan Hetherington - *When One Door Closes*

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When One Door Closes plays at The Roundhouse Theatre at Kelvin Grove

Think about the most powerful human emotions. Take someone in severe emotional agony. How might that look? I suspect a body contorted. And love has you doing somersaults. Joy is light and like dancing on air. If you break it down like that La Boite Theatre Company's decision to work with circus masters Circa for the first show of the 2016 season makes perfect sense.

The work is described as a fusion that combines three turn of the century classics Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House* and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* told in circus form. At their heart these stories about Nora, Hedda and Miss Julie are stories about powerful women wrestling with past trauma as well as love, desire and sex. If we think about power plays we might describe someone being forced to jump through hoops. Bodies are entwined in passion or swinging off the chandeliers in wilder moments. They tumble. People throw themselves at another in a new relationship or are cast aside when things sour. We use these metaphors widely. They are all physical. They all describe that the stock moves of a circus performer.

So while my initial reaction to trying to tell classics as a circus was one of scepticism, I was won over. Don't see this if you expect a retelling of any one or all of these works. It's not that. It's more about the essence of the women. It's about the rough and tumble of life. The juggle. The balancing act. It's about the days you think you are hanging on only by a thread and the days you think you are about to be hit by a wrecking ball. It's about times when you are hoisted on the shoulders of friends and days when you are dropped from a great height. It's funny and sad and sexy. The soundtrack provided by Sydney-based composer Oonagh Sherrard was a perfect accompaniment to the bodies. And it's quite possible I got every bit of that wrong and missed what it was trying to say totally. But it's described as a non-narrative mash-up so I'm okay with that. Right or wrong it looked beautiful and the performers were extraordinary.

At 90 minutes it was a little too long but certainly well worth the effort. Watching it made me excited for watch Circa's Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz may pull out in his role as Creative Lead for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. *When One Door Closes* plays at The Roundhouse Theatre at Kelvin Grove until April 23. The performance I saw was the final preview before the official opening.