

British Theatre Guide

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Alma, a Human Voice

Dramaturgy and interpretation Lorenzo Piccolo

Nina's Drag Queens

Summerhall

3–26 August 2018



Delicately staged, *Alma, a Human Voice*, is an exploration of two 'women' locked into an emotionally expressive loop, neither fully in control of their own actions.

Interweaving extracts from Jean Cocteau's *The Human Voice* and the story of Oscar Kokoschka's muse, the piece fuses drag, lip-sync, shadow play and reflective narration with Lorenzo Piccolo inhabiting the body of each woman: one real and sobbing down a telephone, the other a life-sized doll, celebrated and manipulated.

Piccolo is a thoughtful and at times witty communicator, observing, creating and becoming. Switching emotional states, wigs and characters it's an engaging, if at times confusing, watch. His physicality is largely graceful and understated, lending comedy and dramatic effect to his moments of melodrama and an explosive frenzied dance routine.

From the beginning, where Piccolo wheels on a suitcase full of female props and costumes, to the beautiful shadowy finish, it's clear this is a show bursting with and relying on metatheatricality to drive it forward.

Ultimately however, its pace is somewhat flat and the narrative muddled—the carefully constructed visuals the defining feature.

Reviewer: [Amy Yorston](#)