

British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

Apocalypse - A Glamorously Ugly Cabaret

Occasional Cabaret in collaboration with Clancy Productions
Tron Theatre, Glasgow, and touring
(2011)

The end of the world - it has been prophesised by many. There was Nostradamus and, of course, the Mayan Calendar which ends in 2012 is viewed by many as a harbinger of the apocalypse. The latest in this long line are Catherine Gillard and Nancy Walsh. The end of the world is nigh and these two cabaret performers sing away the final hours as they count down towards the climb to heaven or was that hell?

This debut production by Occasional Cabaret, in collaboration with Clancy Productions, is a dark comedy packed with satire and political punches. The make-up has smeared and the costumes have faded, but their optimism has not. They've led ethical lives. They've recycled plastic bottles, reused their shopping bags. They're not racist, sexist, homophobic and don't have anything against the disabled. So that settles it. They must be going to heaven. Through their final show, their farewell to the world they look forward to an afterlife full of beauty, perfection and no fat people.

Yet the final interviews at the gates of heaven tell a different story. Here the satire becomes rather pointed. If you earned more than \$2,000 a year, then you were rich. You should have done more. If you never volunteered your time to a charity, then you have no excuse. If you ate three meals per day, then you were greedy. While aimed at poking fun at those obsessed with prophesising man's destruction it's just not hard hitting enough. The punches lack force and the audience lose interest, preferring to doodle on the tables that demand to know if they take their own bags to the shop. The tone becomes preachy and, while the idea itself is clever, the final product lacks weight.

All the glamour of cabaret is lost. The singing is okay, the music is okay and although you do occasionally have either Gillard or Walsh sitting on your table, it lacks any glitz or glamour. The piece is ambitious but the finished product is disappointing.

Reviewer: [Alison Burns](#)