

# British Theatre Guide

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

## Architecting

The TEAM  
Barbican Pit  
(2009)

In the 15 months since it appeared at [Traverse](#) and was awarded a Fringe First, The TEAM have worked hard on *Architecting*. The result is an evening with far more of a narrative running through it, while the quirky illogicality that has become the company's trademark is never lost.

Now the New Yorkers' co-production with the National Theatre of Scotland makes a great deal more sense, especially in the first half of an evening that has extended to nearly three hours, including an interval.

The play follows three timelines and they are the best means of understanding the underlying themes. In the present day, Libby King plays a young architect, Carrie Campbell, who pursues the dream of her late father to create what they call "a traditional neighbourhood development".

This is achieved as part of a project to rebuild New Orleans, devastated by Hurricane Katrina in the same way that Tara, the home of Scarlett O'Hara in the earliest thread, was by fire at the end of *Gone with the Wind*.

The middle era is represented solely by Margaret or Peggy Mitchell, the author of that racist (the TEAM's adjective rather than this critic's) blockbuster on page and screen.

Miss Mitchell has to face up to the racist indictment and this is emphasised with great humour when a typically shallow Hollywood producer commissions a sometimes hilarious race-neutral remake of her most famous work.

Until the interval, using song, movement, multimedia and text, *Architecting* balances Carrie's ambitions with intrusions from *GWTW* characters especially Kristen Sieh's forceful Miss O'Hara and her (cross gender and race) Mammy but also their creator.

This all fits together remarkably well and offers a commentary on both *GWTW* as well as contemporary American life and as Director Rachel Chavkin expresses it "national and personal reconstruction". This is seen not only in the aftermath of the Civil War but also Katrina and more recently the advent of the Obama Administration.

The clarity begins to evaporate after the interval, where the script has changed less significantly. Now, observed by old Peggy from a rooftop, a young couple head for a Scarlett O'Hara contest that comes to a surprising conclusion as the world symbolically comes crashing down all around them while a beautiful dance adds to the spectacle.

The six members of the ensemble give their all with Kristen Sieh playing Scarlett O and Lana Lesley, replacing the unavailable Jessica Almasy as her inventor, getting the best parts and lines.

Architecting is by far the best work that the TEAM have produced to date (on this side of the Atlantic anyway) and in this new incarnation, makes them far more accessible. This may owe something to NTS and especially Davey Anderson but a great deal to the offbeat creativity of the company itself.

*Rachel Lynn Brody [reviewed](#) this production in New York*

**Reviewer:** [Philip Fisher](#)