

# British Theatre Guide

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## Box Clever

Monsay Whitney

nabokov

Roundabout @ Summerhall

4–27 August 2017



*Box Clever* packs a real punch. It follows Marnie, an EastEnders with more attitude than a year of TV soaps, as she tries to stay afloat in a hostile environment.

Very little about her life is good, starting with the feisty lady's choice of men, each of whom is more psychotic than the last.

As a result, she and 4-year-old daughter Autumn are forced to live in a refuge filled with society's dregs, the mad and the violent needing protection from the madder and more violent.

In little more than an hour, viewers witness battles with ex-lovers, an uncaring mother, fellow residents, social services and the law in an all too believable story about society's underclass today.

These culminate in a horror story about child abuse and a mother's difficulties in her efforts to obtain justice.

The staging is novel and doesn't entirely come off. Under the direction of Stef O'Driscoll for nabokov, Whitney herself plays Marnie with astonishing conviction, while Avi Simmons, complete with clown's nose, takes all of the other roles supporting what might otherwise have been a tiring solo.

At times, audibility is an issue and the kids' TV style presentation occasionally threatens to dilute the piece's indisputable power but overall, *Box Clever* is a strong contribution to the 2017 Roundabout programme.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)