

British Theatre Guide

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Between Dog and Wolf

Sean Buckley

A Play, A Pie and A Pint

Shunt Vaults, London Bridge

(2007)

The third London production in *A Play, A Pie and A Pint* format owes something to Charles Dickens. Paines Plough Artistic Director Roxana Silbert directs a contemporary ghost story with echoes of *A Christmas Carol* but a much darker conclusion.

The audience enters to note a shirt and jeans spread on the ground like a police crime scene reconstruction. When the lights come up, they have been inhabited by John Savage, a Scots decorator played by Neil McKinven.

He is roused seemingly from the dead by his 16 year old daughter Kate, who like all of the other characters who lead John through his nightmare, is played by the versatile Cath Whitefield.

When John gets to his feet, we and he notice that he is covered in blood. The rest of the early evening is spent in discovering why, with the help of a series of passers-by.

The one constant is Kate, whom we soon establish had died, following a horrific kidnap and rape exactly a year before. This has sent her father into an alcohol-fuelled freefall from which she attempts to rescue him.

John is certainly an angry man, wrecking everything within reach and insulting his Polish boss, Scottish wife and Rasta, English and Northern Irish men and women with whom he comes into contact. This presents a real challenge to Miss Whitefield and she rises to it remarkably well, convincing as both male and female and with each accent in a character acting *tour de force*.

By the end, we understand why John has determinedly destroyed his own life, having seen his beloved daughter inexplicably violated and murdered.

Between Dog and Wolf is a small piece on a topic that is constantly in the news headlines. It looks into the experiences of an ordinary man and avoids being judgemental, which is not easy. Sean Buckley has a way with words and even at its harshest, the play is often poetic.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)