

# British Theatre Guide

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## The Double Bass

Patrick Süskind, translated by Michael Hofmann

Southwark Playhouse

(2003)

In this adaptation of Patrick Süskind's novel, the eponymous instrument becomes a series of mixed metaphors. It represents the wife that its mad player does not have, his imagined lover and his only friend.

Under the direction of actor, Andy Serkis, Bev Willis is trapped in a white box which might symbolise his character's increasing madness. Every experience in his life is related to his double bass. This at least allows the audience to learn a lot about music and this often under-rated instrument.

The increasingly bizarre behaviour and observations of the maddened player contain some humour but too little insight into the human condition.

Willis works extremely hard and energetically but the play loses focus and might have benefited from substantial pruning.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)