

British Theatre Guide

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East Belfast Boy

Fintan Brady

Prime Cut Productions

Summerhall

16–26 August 2018



“East Belfast Boy is a cliché free zone. Meet Davy. The things he sees. His streets. His mates. His girl and... The Boys.”

Davy is very much a boy. His life revolves around the techno music, his family, his mates, his girl. But he is, painfully, very much on the verge of facing adulthood. It will be a very difficult delivery. Life is happening to him.

Ryan McParland is steeped in this take-no-prisoners character. A good deal of the performance is Davy's addiction to the dance and music. Every pause is filled with this as atmosphere; a chance for the audience to catch up. For McParland as Davy is wound tight as a spring.

The stage has only a white rectangular box which he jumps on and off of to punctuate a thought. He wipes his face with his sleeve and runs his hands through his hair like uncontrollable tics.

McParland wears Fintan Brady's script like a kid glove. McParland's unforgivable rich accent meant I only understood about half of what he was saying. Sad. But I don't really think that it would make much difference.

The lights and music are very much of the '80s techno world. Sound designer Phil Kiran has a nimble finger on the amplitude lever; always just on the edge of too much. But Kiran has a lot more musical tricks up his sleeves. There are times when the music takes us to the other world, outside of Davy.

Director Emma Jordan and choreographer Oona Doherty have helped McParland find the character and pace and then, smartly, gotten out of the way. This is a magical and sad slice of life of youth on the dole.

Reviewer: [Catherine Henry Lamm](#)