

# British Theatre Guide

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

## Party

Tom Basden  
Arts Theatre  
(2010)

*Party* has finally arrived in London after it's sold out performances at last year's Edinburgh Festival and in the wake of current election promises the production should have even more of a pull at the polls - sorry Box Office.

In the glamorous setting of Jared's (an obsessively polite Jonny Sweet) summer house, masquerading beautifully as a shed, five people sit and plan the future of their so far un-named political party. The naming issue is a sore point, as is their purpose, direction, slogan, logo and general viewpoint on the world at large. The show opens with a vote for China which they all agree on until Duncan (the always loveable Tim Key) asks for clarification on what he's just voted for and the debate begins all over again. This group is well meaning and are sincere in their vague aims, agreeing only that they are democratic and might quite like a space program if they could afford it. The party treasury however, a Thomas the Tank Engine money box, has less than £50 inside it so it looks a bit unlikely.

The razor sharp one-act script covers massive political ground including terrorism ("I'm against terror. I'm also against the war on terror"), human rights, climate change ("yeah, icebergs and things"), religion and foreign policy all captured within seemingly inane arguments and conversations. A combination of naïveté and self-belief demonstrate perfectly that a little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous thing.

With completely straight performances and every character looking out for number one, this is cuttngly satirical and scarily plausible. Mel (suitably sulky Anna Crilly) wants a recount after the leadership vote, Jones (the multi-talented Tim Basden) loses his temper after being denied coffee as Phoebe (Katy Wix's confused feminist) forgot to buy Fair Trade and Duncan (brought in because his Dad owns a printing shop) just wants a slice of lemon drizzle cake.

The bickering, back biting and overt politeness brilliantly demonstrate just how annoying democracy can be, packing in plenty of laughs and wrapped up beautifully in just under an hour.

*To 13th March*

Reviewer: [Amy Yorston](#)