

# British Theatre Guide

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

## Lizzie Roper in Peccadillo Circus

A Documentary Comedy about Britain's Sex life

Trafalgar Studio 2

(2007)

Lizzie Roper is a talented actress.

The *Peccadillo Circus* is a collection of seven characters' edited, yet verbatim, monologues, all presented by Roper in 60 long minutes of 36 scenes see-sawing from character to character - a Jungian analyst in her 70s to a non-orgasmic woman to a dominatrix and an online sex addict. It is directed by Leisa Rea.

The Arts indulge in 'movements' and 'genre' to classify a style or method of executing ideas. This play can therefore be categorised as 'Verbatim Theatre'. This technique was pioneered by Anna Deavere-Smith in *Fires in the Mirror*. The drama in this genre is a fusion created by the edited interviews on a specific issue; in Roper's play it is sex.

Much is made of the need to convey precisely what said and how it was said by the interviewees. That ultimate precision is achieved by an iPod with the recorded (yet edited) interviews strapped to the arm of the actor echoing the interviewees.

The musical interlude included notes from the romantically caressing Verdi's *La Traviata*, followed by a screening of talking heads including that of Roper, informing us that the actual play will be 'like circular breathing' that Roper is a mere cipher, repeating what was said and recorded.

The interviews were skilfully edited and communicated. Unfortunately the substance of these interviews was akin to a limp verbal masturbation with a twist at the end of each scene.

There was some humour and an abundance of voyeurism in what was said. There was nothing engaging. The content may have shocked an audience some years ago, but with the overflow of sex brought to cinema screens, glossy magazines and some TV programmes, Roper's interviews fall flat. The play fails to stimulate or facilitate any exchange of ideas that interviews with people might be expected to do.

*Runs until March 3, 2007.*

**Reviewer:** [Rivka Jacobson](#)