

British Theatre Guide

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Possible

Shôn Dale-Jones

National Theatre Wales

Pleasance Online

6–30 August 2021

Shôn Dale-Jones is—he tells us at the start, in case we didn't know—a storyteller; he has always told stories that are entirely true, entirely made up or some combination of the two. In past shows such as [The Duke](#) and [Me & Robin Hood](#), his stories have been personal and mostly believable, until they start to contradict themselves.

Possible is entirely plausible as it is set in a world we have all had to live in for the past year and a half, one that we couldn't have imagined the last time a full Fringe took place. However, unlike many of the many lockdown stories, it doesn't just reflect back at us what we already know or make the same gags, such as older relatives trying to talk on Zoom while on mute. It is a compelling personal journey that is both funny and moving and starts with how his life was profoundly affected when he was young by the lyric of "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five.

The whole piece is the story of how this show was created, but in fact begins when he was commissioned to write another show about love by Lorne Campbell, artistic director of National Theatre Wales. When COVID struck and everything shut down, all of his and his wife's work disappeared, but Lorne—or 'Saint Lorne' as Shôn calls him at this point—still wants him to write the show, but the problem is he keeps calling him, hoping to see some results.

Shôn, however, has a few distractions during lockdown. His mother becomes anxious about the pandemic and begins baking scones in the middle of the night, which worries his siblings; the five of them can't agree what to do about it when they argue on their ironically named WhatsApp group "Keep Calm". His daughter is worried that her landlord is putting up the rent, while they look at having to sell their own house to make ends meet, and his father-in-law in Switzerland has worsening dementia and has had a serious fall.

Shôn's response is to take a break from writing to 'understand his inner self', but, apart from not being popular with those around him, it unlocks some dark memories of when he was at public school that may have been of sexual abuse but it isn't clear—or wasn't to me.

Dale-Jones is a charismatic storyteller and it's impossible not to be drawn into the tales he weaves, complete with diversions and flashbacks. Music is provided live by John Biddle, but his contributions are more than just background or atmosphere, although they provide both; he uses various styles of music to set the mood and picks out words of the story into repeated lyrics that become integral to the piece, especially when synchronised with Bear Thompson's films, which combine stock footage with abstract images and genuine family shots that surround the storyteller.

All of this adds up to a wonderful hour and a quarter that is set against the backdrop of the pandemic but is about so much more, especially about families coming together (or failing to) when

various crises hit, all told with passion and humour.

Reviewer: [David Chadderton](#)