

British Theatre Guide

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Spinach

Written by Janine Waters, music composed by Simon Waters

Waters Edge

King's Head Theatre

12 June–7 July 2012

Spinach offers much more complexity and pleasure than the one-flavour title suggests. This well-stuffed roulade at the King's Head isn't the most obvious union to treat the taste buds, but this all-sung comedy thriller garnished with a dash of social commentary is a surprising and enjoyable dish.

The story starts with the young protagonists waking up together and not remembering anything about how they got there. The twist here is that socially compassionate journalist Kate and pharmaceutical worker Tom find themselves tied up, back to back, in a dark room, and without any memory of how or why they might have been apparently kidnapped.

Their history unfolds as snippets of memory are assembled through flashbacks and conversations peppered with bickering, recrimination and character-revealing slips. Even at the most sinister plot points, the text is packed with very funny lines that just keep coming.

The unravelling of the mystery is teasingly clever and well-structured which makes the eleventh hour appearance of the perpetrator, who explains everything in one song, just on the edge of being overly neat and even slightly disappointing, even if it is very comic.

Subjoined, the mystery having been solved, is a loose end-tying epilogue which has an endearing new romantic start for Kate and Tom and a bizarrely humorous happy ending for the other characters.

The entire script is sung, the recitative breaking only occasionally to admit a standalone song, but whether dialogue or lyric there are some choice rhymes and the characters' idiom is exploited for comic effect. Outstanding amongst the songs is germaphobe Maureen's solo when she sings of compulsive washing "buffing it til it burns" as a prequel to septic sex.

Simon Waters has composed a perky score that largely sits behind Janine Waters's words principally accompanying what is spoken or punctuating the action, but getting the limelight deservedly with a very funny juxtaposing of sax solo and dramatic action.

Tom is played by ex-*Hollyoaks* star Ben Gerrard. Tall and handsome, it is difficult to believe such a Tom would have difficulties getting girlfriends, but Garrard's unlikely hero is a real man who eats quiche and shows his vulnerable side.

Cassandra Compton has an attractive voice and terrific comic timing making an adorable slipper-knitting, well intentioned Kate.

Tom's mate Darren is strongly played by Craig Whittaker as is colleague Maureen by Claire Greenway in fine voice (and sax) and turning in a strongly comic performance.

Spinach—who'd have known greens could be this much fun?

Reviewer: [Sandra Giorgetti](#)