

British Theatre Guide

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

The Moon The Moon

Clare Duffy, Jon Spooner and Chris Thorpe
Unlimited Theatre, in association with Curve, Leicester
Northern Stage, Newcastle, and touring
(2009)

I find myself floundering, reduced to pigeon-holing, influence-spotting, plot-outlining

The Moon The Moon is deceptive. A Man (Jon Spooner), it would appear, is about to commit suicide by walking into the February sea, carrying with him a freshly cooked Christmas dinner in a carrier bag. He is talked out of it by an Older Man (Tim Chipping), who takes him to a pub, where he is looked after by the Older Man and the Younger Woman (Suzanne Ahmet). This care gradually turns to attempts to treat his mental illness. He is kept in the cellar, fastened to the wall, as they try various strategies. He is haunted by the Moon (Helen Cassidy), who at times takes on the *persona* of his wife, Daisy. The increasingly intrusive, even traumatic, curative strategies culminate in a scene of *grand guignol* proportions.

Is this all happening within his mind, as, for example, in the first part of Anthony Neilson's *Dissocia*? Or is it a mixture of the Absurd and Theatre of Cruelty, Ionesco mixed with Artaud? The language has that almost-reality that we see in the work of Torben Betts.

The mantra-like strap line of the publicity says, "Stay and let them heal you. Or go with the Moon and live."

He goes with the Moon, and, at the end, the Moon (or is it Daisy?) and he are together, high up, in the fading light. There is, then, a resolution of sorts, but quite what it signifies is obscure. Was the *grand guignol* scene an alternative, or was it actual and the resolution is death?

As I say, I'm floundering. But what I *am* sure about are the production values: an interesting, albeit not quite realistic set designed by Rhys Jarman, an at times almost subliminal and at others very loud soundscape by Mic Pool (with original music by David Edwards) and atmospheric lighting by Ben Pacey. The performances are impeccable.

But perhaps that's the way it should be, with a meaning that is more emotional than intellectual.

Philip Fisher [reviewed](#) this production at Southwark Playhouse

Reviewer: [Peter Lathan](#)