

# British Theatre Guide

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

## Trilogy

Nic Green  
Barbican Theatre  
(2010)

The only word to describe *Trilogy* is a phenomenon. What started as a piece of experimental performance has been projected into a major artistic event filling one of London's largest theatres.

This is a double-edged sword. When the show appeared in an [Edinburgh church](#), it had all of the charm and spontaneity that one might expect from a female performance artist in her mid-20s expressing strongly held views on the appropriate place to women in society. There were rough edges and a real community spirit, helped by the (naked) presence of 20 or so local women recruited and trained for the week.

The experience at the Barbican is completely different. In some ways, it is far better, since this latest incarnation of *Trilogy* is like a perfectly oiled machine. Every word and move has been honed to perfection and in this purpose-built space, there is room not for 20 volunteers to go through their moves but 200, amazingly a limiting factor that prevented more would-be dancers from appearing.

There is little doubt that Nic Green will now go on to conquer the world and nobody should be surprised to hear that in the near future thousands, if not tens of thousands, of naked women have appeared as part of a performance somewhere around the world. In almost every way, this is good news since it brings an important message to a much wider audience.

The short first leg of the *Trilogy* features Miss Green and her closest collaborator Laura Bradshaw setting the scene for a three-hour long evening including two intervals that sets out to empower women of all ages.

The words are soon followed by movement and beautifully choreographed dance, initially from this pair and then, leading to the first interval, their 200 new best friends. Where in Edinburgh the group dance demonstrated the bravery of a handful of women and created a real intimacy with their audience rather like one of those 1960s happenings, now we were very clearly in the presence of something completely different, a major artistic statement.

The second part starts with extracts from the seminal 1971 film *Town Bloody Hall*, which recorded for posterity a feminist meeting in New York, bizarrely chaired by an aggressive and eventually defeated Norman Mailer, who made no attempt to cover his distaste at much of what was going on.

The film primarily focused on the high as a kite lesbian journalist Jill Johnston and Nic Green's role model the Australian icon Germaine Greer propounding views that were both original and radical almost 40 years ago but now seem far more mainstream.

The action on screen was then deconstructed and recreated in an ironic fashion that might almost have owed something to Picasso. This was built up using dance, movement, straight imitation and some deliberately rickety props.

The final session was an unembarrassed advert for Miss Green's [makeyourownherstory.org](http://makeyourownherstory.org) website. This included a charming telephone conversation between Laura Bradshaw and her mum about the joys of ageing gracefully and accepting your lot and some suggestions about promoting and supporting women in a society that still far too regularly treats them as second class citizens.

To bring the evening to a close, the whole audience was asked to join in with a rousing chorus of William Blake's *Jerusalem*, a song that had at various times been used to promote the women's movement, left-leaning politics, the Church and John Major. It has to be said that our guides were somewhat dubious about that last pairing's adoption of something that they hold sacred.

At the end of the day, *Trilogy* has become a mass tribute to womankind. This is a fantastic achievement but in some ways may actually be bad news. In Edinburgh on a smaller scale, it still had space to enable some of its participants visibly to discover themselves during the course of the evening.

The Barbican unsurprisingly sold out its two nights but there is little doubt that *Trilogy* will last for as long as its performers' knees and ankles can hold out, since both popular and critical response is leading to the kind of word of mouth promotion that is impossible to buy.

**Reviewer:** [Philip Fisher](#)