

# British Theatre Guide

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

## What Would Judas Do?

Written and performed by Stewart Lee  
Bush Theatre  
(2007)

Stewart Lee is one of the men behind *Jerry Springer - The Opera* and so when he announced that he would perform his own solo play, directed by award-winning writer/actor Will Adamsdale, you could expect seats to go like hot cakes. If nothing else, there were likely to be a few fireworks and, with luck, blasphemy might be on the agenda.

The simple set also promises drama, consisting of little except a round table surrounded by chairs but topped by a sinister, hanging noose.

Lee opens proceedings by announcing that he is Judas and then explains to those who might be fooled by the beanie, scarf and high-laced DM's that this is indeed the man who betrayed Jesus for twenty (sic) pieces of gold. The price is specified by a hoped-for theologian in the second row, who is rewarded with a bag of nuts (from the 98p shop by the tube station?).

Judas then runs through the story of his own and Jesus' final week, leading up to a last supper that requires serious audience participation but at least offers everyone some cheap wine and a few loaves of bread.

The fifty-minute performance is delivered in the style of a stand-up routine by the chunky man, who covers almost every inch of the auditorium and involves and feeds the far fewer than 5,000 in attendance. As a performer, Lee seems very relaxed but this may have been a front as he seemingly got lost amongst his lines on more than one occasion but that might have been a deliberate manifestation of character.

The audience seemed a little bemused by the whole thing, with surprisingly few laughs at what ultimately became a deconstruction of the Gospels in search of laughs or at the very least some wry smiles.

If a top writer decides to attack this material, one might have expected something with more bite and shock effect. What we actually got was a series of sometimes amusing musings about an innocent man who got caught up in events but not the something special that we had all surely been hoping for.

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