

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2024

The Mariana Trench produced by Theatre Ronin

★★★★ The Mumble

By Raymond Speedie

Under the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, the Roman Lodge plays host to one of this Fringe's cultural delights. The Mariana Trench by Theatre Ronin (Hong Kong) is a contemporary performance arts piece, telling a story of times past, when leaving home at a young age to become a Maid was nothing unusual.

Bamboo furnishings, soft lighting and perfectly placed props propel you back in time to a more traditional Hong Kong, while the use of written and spoken words in Cantonese, engulfs your senses with the real essence of the Far East. 1960s Hong Kong was a much different place than now, but To Yim-shan and Wong Ka-Chun capture that moment in time with profound emotion. Meanwhile, Tim Chan provides a live soundtrack that certainly compliments the character's journeys in the best possible way.

Deep sentiments are like a warm breeze, and loneliness can mimic an icy cold wind, and "The Mariana Trench" explores these emotions beautifully. Like ripples on a still ocean, the two actors calmly capture the depths of young love. His mission and passion is photography, hers is to help her family, but love has a different tale to tell – but is selling yourself to it like flogging a dead horse, or is life really about those chance meetings that cultivate the seeds we finally sow?

Acting comes easy to the cast members and is executed with heart and soul that enlightens the audience with a better understanding of the virtues of life. Youthfulness, discovery, learning and dreams all feature and carry this play well. Smooth as a silk-worm, and streamlined as a newly born butterfly, Theatre Ronin enriches the world of theatrical performance, unveiling an exciting new level as it does so. Life is a story, all our stories blend, and so of mankind's struggle for togetherness director Alex Tam Hung-man has adapted something quite unique.