



The Herald

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Enough to take breath away

Theatre

Graft – Tales of an Actor,
Komedia@Southside

Robert Thomson

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WITH Steven Berkoff's Messiah premiering elsewhere on the Fringe, it would be easy to dismiss George Dillon's one-man adaptation of the writer's "tales of an actor" as simply the homage of a true disciple. No-one else captures Berkoff's voice quite like Dillon, after all. This, however, would be a grave disservice, overlooking the virtuosity of Dillon's performance that makes Harry - the conspiracy-theorising failed actor - very much his own; that holds the audience so rapt that at points I am convinced we collectively stopped breathing.

It would also do an injury to Berkoff's writing that is so incisive, so damning of the "business" of theatre, that the young actress in the row behind me turned to her companion at the end, and with a sigh that verged on tears said: "So what are we going to do now?" She was not referring to the rest of the evening. It is certainly a tragedy - this life of a rep actor with only a modicum of talent but a blackly comic one, and Dillon clowns as much as he grimaces, strutting and fretting his hour upon the stage in a way that is intuitive and inventive - the most compelling storytelling you will see.