

The Finborough Theatre presents

Live Canon: Committed

Presented by Live Canon in association with Neil McPherson

An evening of poetry

Directed by Helen Eastman

Performed by Anthony Shuster, Alice Barclay and Charles de Bromhead

A review by Marion Drew for EXTRA! EXTRA!

What a pleasure it is to have people who are unmistakably passionate about words, set about presenting poems that delight and surprise, darken and illuminate, provoke and seduce, in short, do all the things that fine poetry does in its own inimitable way.

This programme of works, selected with evident care from the works of among others, Francis Thompson, Emily Dickinson, Siegfried Sassoon and Charlotte Mary Mew was beautifully crafted.

Opening with Elizabeth Bishop's poem *Visit to St. Elizabeth's*, the journey we were to take along the very fine line between poetic genius and insanity was clearly laid out for us. For in this evening of 'poetic bedlam', in the company of poets, many of whom had been labelled insane or mad and/or who had spent time in asylums, we did indeed find '*the tragic ... the talkative ... honoured... the brave ... the cranky ... the busy ... the cruel ...the wretched*'.

There were well known favourites like Robert Frost's timeless *The Road Not Taken*, but also less familiar or frequently performed poems such as Reverend Christopher Smart's humorous *My Cat Geoffrey*.

Most of the poems were spoken, but a few were sung a cappella, such as poet/composer Ivor Gurney's *Severn Meadows*, and one of the performers, Alice Barclay set Siegfried Sassoon's *Everyone Sang* to a beautiful three-part intricate arrangement.

The performers, Anthony Shuster, Charles de Bromhead and Alice Barclay performed with a clarity and respect for the works that was commanding, and maintained an engaging intensity throughout. Their performances provided just a touch of interesting visual life to the poems, but this was never allowed to intrude

into the space and freedom given to the words themselves to work their enchantment.

What an extraordinary art form poetry is, and what justice Live Canon does to it!

In another poetic venture, the group will be presenting 'The Immortal Memory - The 250th Burns Night' a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. It would seem that this should not be missed.

Immortal Memory is on the 25th January 2009

7.30pm

Tickets £28, £24 concessions INCLUDING three course meal and a wee dram.

24 Hour Box Office 0844 847 1652

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