

Toff

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Trips for Older Females and Fellows

Toff Tips

Ted Craig went to see **WAR CORRESPONDENTS** at Stratford Circus.

He writes: Helen Chadwick has created this 'song theatre performance' from recorded interviews with journalists who covered conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, DR Congo and Liberia to name a few. These extraordinary stories and life changing experiences have been fused into an intriguing song cycle performance using physicality and music. The 29 songs listed in the programme cover 75 minutes of playing time and the cast of five (including the author) do not stop for a moment. On a simple set with a stretched tarpaulin at the back, a mass of desk lights and some moveable tables they focus the stories simply and effectively.

Some songs just put the words of the journalists into music form which I thought was a little redundant at times (the recordings being so powerful in themselves). But at its best, the music underlines and comments on the journalists' words in a gentle and very touching way. One song with the lyric: '*On The Day That You Killed Me*' was particularly effective and quite Sondheimesque.



There was a memorable story from one of the journalists: he was taking a walk in a deceptively quiet part of a village when a bullet suddenly whizzed over his head, then another shot just missed him and he managed to scramble back into the house in which he was staying. Later a young man came to visit his hosts and although the journalist could not understand what was being said, he kept hearing the word 'sniper' and realised that this was the man that had been shooting at him. As the visitor got up to leave he asked the reporter to share a toast with him. "Why should I toast a man who was shooting at me?" the reporter said, to which the visitor replied: "Because I'm such a bad shot!" This is a thought provoking and enjoyable evening which is much recommended.

WAR CORRESPONDENTS is composed by Helen Chadwick, Co-directed by Steven Hoggett and Helen Chadwick, Sceneographer and Creative Associate Miriam Nabarro Produced by Penny Mayes for Dramatic Solutions

The production is on tour and will be playing at:

Tues 21 October Aberystwyth Arts Centre 01970 623232

Weds 22 October The Stables, Wavendon, Milton Keynes 01908 280800

Thurs 23 to Sat 25 October Salisbury Playhouse 01722 321744