

Ellen & Rigby – Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool

Reviewer: John McRoberts

The Reviews Hub - North West July 8, 2021 1 2 minutes read



Image: Jason Roberts Photography

Writer: Gerry Linford

Director: Stephen Fletcher

The past 15 months have been hard, especially for theatres up and down the country. Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre no exception. Apart from a Christmas show that was cut short after eight performances the Roe Street venue has not had an audience or indeed a show on at the venue. So it's an incredible testament to the team to be producing a full two-hour show, with set and all the trademarks we have come to expect from The Royal Court.

There is no doubt Covid-19 has caused all of us to feel lonely and isolated and that's exactly what our two protagonists Ellen (Lindzi Germain) and Rigby (Andrew Schofield) seek answers for in this Liverpoolian "Odd Couple" comic drama by Gerry Linford. Ellen is a volunteer nurse injecting the locals with Astra Zeneca when fate brings in nervous neighbour Rigby, a cynical misanthrope who just wants to be alone. When Ellen sees her opportunity to not spend another 12 months on her own, she throws herself (quite literally) at Rigby – fireworks, arguments, romance, and soul-seeking become the order of the day as these two hapless misfits learn to live and love each other in ways they didn't even expect.

Director Stephen Fletcher has woven a highly enjoyable and often touching production that showcases Germain and Schofield perfectly. Fletcher balances the pathos of the situation perfectly with the humour we have come to enjoy so much from these much-loved performers. It would be so easy for them to overwhip their performances but here he has found the right tone that stays respectful to Linford's script (which if being brutally honest could do with a little cut here and there) but that is a minor niggle in an otherwise brilliant show.

One massive surprise was the set by Alfie Heywood, one perhaps underestimated what to expect as many venues are trying to curb their show spend to ensure maximum profits to bring the venues back to life, but here no expense has been spared. Heywood's rotating set is beautifully constructed and has so many details that often one found myself reading the posters and looking for the little touches of detail that adorn the stage.

Ellen & Rigby is a fitting tribute to the past 18 months and gives a much-needed injection of energy and theatricality not only to the building but also to the city.

Runs until 31 July 2021

The Reviews Hub Score ★★★★★

★★★★★
Funny & Touching

- #Alfie Heywood
- #Andrew Schofield
- #Ellen & Rigby
- #Gerry Linford
- #Ian Scott
- #Lindzi Germain
- #Liverpool
- #Royal Court
- #Stephen Fletcher



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One Comment

Ann Marie Kluge
August 7, 2021 at 6:35 pm
A brilliant show we went for a family evening out, we laughed so much but it did get the Row of the McDonald Family having a little cry. Such talent by writer, Director and Ellen and Rigby

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