

REVIEW

‘Monologue of a Madwoman’

“Monologue of a Madwoman”, presented and performed by Lin Van Hek and Joe Dolce. At the Harbourlight Theatre. February 2-3. Running time 2 hrs. Reviewed by Alan Scott.

“Monologue of a Madwoman” is a musical and literary cabaret. It is essentially a series of monologues performed by Lin Van Hek that are accompanied by Joe Dolce on guitar or interspersed with his songs.

The theme is not madness but the making of madness as the audience is treated to a feminist review of renowned literary or artistic women who are distinguished both by their exceptional talents and their tragic ends. This is political theatre and is a rare and welcome intrusion into the conservatism of Christchurch’s drama scene.

The cabaret is in turn funny, poignant, and angry. It dazzles with a brilliant intensity created by the power of Van Hek’s acting and the luminosity of the women’s work. We are given extreme emotion or extreme mistreatment, yet it is delivered by an actor so totally in control of her own skills that the women’s works are never underplayed or overtaken.

The highlight for me was Van Hek’s performance of Sylvia Plath’s work. She narrated Plath’s poetry as well as I have heard it. Her control of the difficult rhythm of the poem was truly exceptional. As she speaks the poem you can feel, almost see, Plath disintegrating and going mad. Yet, of course, Van Hek is totally with it, and completely focused; alive to every nuance of every word.

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand