

Show Info

Admission: \$25 Adult; \$23 School

Venue: Bakehouse Theatre – Main Stage

Links: [Website](#) | [Tickets](#)



When [Dawson Nichols](#), as mental patient Joseph, shuffles onto the stage in the dim light of a flickering lantern and softly whispers, “I think I might be Edgar Allen Poe,” you know you are about to be transported to a hauntingly strange, poignantly dark, and fiercely funny world. Joseph, like his idol, is trapped in the isolating knowledge that he will never be understood: “The doctors can’t understand. I need your opinion,” he says in a simple plea to the audience. As much as Joseph’s

tale of anxiety and bewilderment is heartrending, and Nichols's performance riveting, it is also honest and touching in its humour.

As Joseph explains and examines the parallels that he sees in his own life and that of Poe, he performs three of Poe's most famous works. Each performance, from the brilliant and Golem-esque use of shadow in "Silence — A Fable", to the red-rimmed eyes that morph and transform with the narrator's derangement in "The Raven", to the twisted and erratic descent of the murderer in "The Tell Tale Heart", remind us of the intricacies of Poe's psychological horror stories. And Nichols's swift transitions back to Joseph make the links in character and themes intrinsically precise and clear. Poe lived a life of poverty and frustration, and his thematic obsession with death is shared by Joseph, who recounts his personal experiences in memories and dreams. Here, again, Nichols shines, as he switches between and embodies

each character so fully that we forget there is only ever one man on stage.

The atmosphere is as essential to the play's success as its performance, and here lighting, sound, and set come together in a way that at once recalls the terror of Poe's work, as well as the complexities and surreal inner workings of Joseph's mind. All 110 minutes of this show are completely and absolutely engrossing, and Nichols is an exceptional performer, writer and producer.