

Virtual Solitaire Review – Rip It Up

Wow! This sort of world-class indie offering is the reason we hover around the Fringes. Originating in Seattle and touring to the point of perfection, Dawson Nichols' riveting one-hander is tight, honed and 100 percent pure mind-and-body cyberpunk theatre.

On a bare set we meet protagonist Nathan, whose circuits are fried. After VR-deck downtime, he will sell his internals "to any fucking corp that'll keep me throttled". It's his job to provide emotional calibration for four introductory characters to a game in development, but he's trapped and running haywire. In true tragic style, overlaid by the perspective of his RL investor-controlled controllers, we watch a myriad exquisitely-differentiated unscheduled characters take form and take over until several unsuccessful reboots seal Nathan's inevitable fate.

Fast, intelligent and driving, it's entertainment immersed in great themes: power exchange, where thought resides and the nature of aloneness. The whole astonishing package is simply, insanely brilliant.

Rating: 5

Kate Battersby