

Review: Guy Masterson – Barking Mad!

ADELAIDE FRINGE

What would you endure for the sake of love? Would you share your beloved with another? Break the law on two continents? Contemplate the taking of a life? ★★★



When Guy Masterson, the acclaimed British actor, director, producer and writer, met Brigitta, the trilingual “model-slash-actress”, he fell hard. So hard, in fact, that he was prepared to play second fiddle to the “other man” in her life – her dog Nelson, a 12-year-old German Spitz.

Masterson is a frequent festival visitor to Adelaide but this is his first time in the comedy section of the Fringe guide, and audiences familiar with his previous one-man shows (*Under Milk Wood*, *Animal Farm*) should come prepared for a very different experience.

The story of his desperate attempts to adapt to life with his canine nemesis is a frenetic and physical performance, with Masterson almost foaming at the mouth as he spits out a series of increasingly hysterical anecdotes.

He paces the stage, moving between two large easels that display images of the other key characters in his sorry autobiographical tale. On the left, the impossibly glamorous Brigitta – then a model in Paris, now mother of

Masterson's children. On the right, the cause of all the torment – Nelson, the perky, garbage-eating, super-pooper ball of fluff.

There are high-energy characterisations of the evil dog's antics, lots of shouting, and a fair dose of self-deprecation. It's over-the-top but certainly got the laughs from the opening-night audience.

At the start of the show, Masterson took a quick "hands-up" poll to survey our opinions on dogs versus cats. He didn't declare his own preferences but I think it's fair to say he won't be adopting a puppy to replace Nelson any time soon.

Three stars

Guy Masterson – Barking Mad! is showing at Mainstage, Bakehouse Theatre, until March 4.