

# Fringe Review:

## *Train Lord*

Sydney author Oliver Mol explores the creative fallout of a debilitating 10-month-long migraine in solo show *Train Lord*.

18 February 2020 by [Kylie Maslen](#)  
ADELAIDE REVIEW

What happens when a writer can no longer write? What happens when pain is so intense that you question who you are and whether you can bare it any longer? Oliver Mol had a migraine that lasted for 10 months. When it ended he slowly began to fall in love with writing again. We are so fortunate to have resulting work such as this in the world.

After the publication of Mol's debut book *Lion Attack!* in 2015 his presence felt like a rush of energy in the Australian literary landscape. Heavily influenced by alt lit writers such as Tao Lin, Mol brought humour and vulnerability to the page whilst equally confronting depression, loneliness and fear.

This sensibility returns in *Train Lord* where there is an undercurrent of innocence being lost: from childhood friends to train drivers, small details and conversations captured are woven together into one narrative. Stories are carefully weighted: the shock of a slap or the sharp intake of breath of recognition, but some – such as a night of intimacy at perhaps his most vulnerable – Mol lingers over daringly, pausing to question masculinity and sexuality with a graceful intensity.

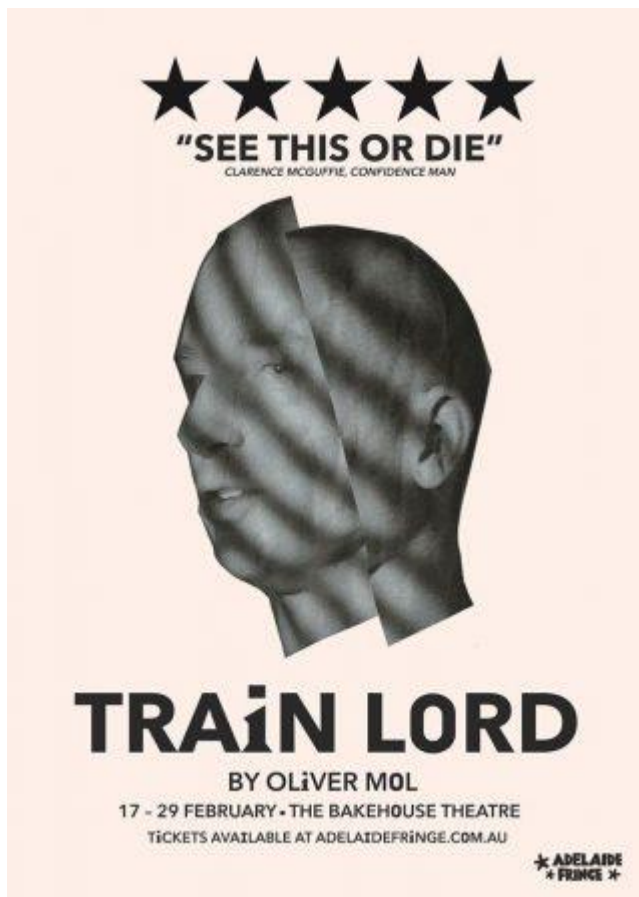
Throughout the hour-long performance the audience are taken in and out of Mol's migraines through colourful projections and a pulsating soundtrack. Although these transitions could be sharper the dull pounding and psychedelic aura is affecting, as is the slow train footage in the depths of depression. Mol moves boldly to centre-stage at the external height of his

vulnerability, but when he sits to the side or nervously plays with his hands we see the fear that took hold at the height of the crisis.

As Mol weaves in and out of stories, back and forth through projection and sound, he bends genre also. There are markers of theatrical monologue and spoken word, or is it an essay read to a *Fourtet* album? The truth is *Train Lord* is all of these things, familiar yet original.

In this performance and in his creation of this work, Mol is no longer the exciting young star he was five years ago and is the better for it. He is less precocious, more weary, but still authentic and astute. He remains a remarkable storyteller, no matter the form.

***Train Lord* was performed at The Bakehouse Theatre on Monday 17 February**



UNTIL 29 FEBRUARY

*Train Lord*