

Stories I Want to Tell You in Person

GREG ELLIOTT | 31 OCTOBER 2014



THEATRE REVIEW | *Stories I Want to Tell You in Person* is described by Brink Productions as a one-woman monologue about how Lally Katz was commissioned to write a play about the global financial crisis but spent her commission money on seeing fortune tellers in New York.

Katz is the author of *Neighbourhood Watch*, recently performed in Adelaide, and she is at her most interesting in this show when she talks of the old Hungarian lady, Ana, on whom she modelled her central character. The writer/performer is skilled at characterisations, accents and voices, bringing to life the various characters she mentions in her stories.

Her performance is more like that of a stand-up comedian than a theatre actor, although she does cross over the two genres. As soon as Katz appears, she has a warmth and radiance that is appealing. She is so enthusiastic about her tales that you want to pay full attention.

I can't describe the stories too fully because that would give away the intrigue and surprise for future audiences; she does introduce us to a Canadian cowboy, a Jewish man, an elderly neighbour, two fortune tellers and others.

As a story-teller, Katz shifts easily into the body, mannerisms and voices of her characters. There are times when she tells of her need to find love and how she has failed in love, and she is at her best when she cleverly intertwines fictional characters into her own life, only to have her life impact on those characters. It is an interesting insight into a writer's creative journey to find the inspiration for a new play.

Katz is able to snap from serious, tender moments into comic lines or take us in a new direction altogether. In the monologue, she talks of the difficulty of finding an ending, and she may not have quite solved that problem yet. Katz is a capable writer and an entertaining performer, and the stories she tells us in person are worth seeing.

Lally Katz's Stories I Want to Tell You in Person, a Belvoir and Malthouse Theatre production, is playing at the Bakehouse Theatre until November 8.