



PRESS RELEASE

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Interview for The List with Rant & Rave Director, Oliver McFadden

A story of seduction, secrets, and sex. **Sexual Fears of a Modern Day Virgin** will change the way you think about sex and virginity forever. With three distinct storylines which only cross incidentally, this play about interpersonal struggles and relationship conflicts is set to be an honest take on modern LGBT life. This show normalises LGBT relationships and presents universal issues which also relate to the lives of straight people.

What was the inspiration for this performance?

Sex. The experience of losing the 'classic' virginity (first penetration) but never quite feeling like 'not a virgin'. Being exposed to the hyper-sexualised world of apps like Grindr forced me to consider the place of sex and relationships in our society, but also how the two interact today. Sex for pleasure and sex for love have, I think, become two separate entities for many people.

Is theatre still a good space for the public discussion of ideas?

Absolutely. I think you have to be careful not to simply tell your audience how they should think, not try to educate them but instead present scenarios where no character is entirely without fault, every character is human and fallible. I think especially when discussing ideas around minorities you have to be careful not to alienate broader audiences. **Sexual Fears of a Modern Day Virgin** is an unashamedly LGBT piece, and the conflicts largely arise from interpersonal issues which are exclusive to LGBT people. An example we almost used in the show is that of gay men who are 'sides' they neither 'top' or 'bottom' and so are never involved in penetration. This issue, despite coming from a distinctly LGBT place, become simply a sex-related conflict - something which arises in nearly every kind of relationship.

How did you become interested in making performance?

I'm not quite sure. One day about a year and a half ago I just sat down and started typing for about 5 hours and came up with half a script. I guess I took part of my inspiration, for the structure of the piece, from Russell T. Davies's *Banana*. About 6 months later I realised I wasn't a script writer, scrapped the whole thing and boiled the ideas down to sex and virginity.

Was your process typical of the way that you make a performance?

Well, I'm a Fringe Virgin and in fact a directing virgin (I've done a few bits but never a full play). I was able to observe Jack Lowe, of Curious Directive, in a few days of his R+D for *Spindrift* and I managed to pick up a few tips there. For this show, and probably for future shows I'd start with themes and basic character ideas, get the cast involved in research and allow them to edit the characters as they see fit before getting them on their feet and throwing them into improvised scenes which we would eventually record. Then, not being a scriptwriter, my Assistant Director, Anissa Praquin, turned the various improvisations into a coherent script which we then rehearsed. Simple.

What do you hope that the audience will experience?

I hope they will experience an honest glimpse into the lives of two couples and one single person. I'm not looking for great revelations, but to leave the audience thinking about their preconceptions about sex and relationships, and even to challenge them, would be amazing.

What strategies did you consider towards shaping this audience experience?

I think using the polished improvisation rehearsal technique to create realistic conversation should help towards the audience feeling almost as though they are voyeuristically observing



private and intimate moments for the characters. We've occasionally used Meisner techniques to try to regain the freshness the piece had in the earliest rehearsals but we have also trusted our actors to allow the moment to take them so that every performance is different.

Listings Information

Sexual Fears of a Modern Day Virgin

- 6th-20th of August (not on Sundays)
- Start Time: 15:00
- Running Time: 50 minutes
- Venue 236: Greenside @ Infirmary Street, Olive Studio EH1 1LT

Notes to editors

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