

# Review

## Contes éroticos-urbains

Théâtre de Poche  
Brussels

**A sexy Bruxellois divertissement – not just for the young.**

*Les Contes éroticos-urbains* make for a dishy little evening out at Le Poche. Four short plays, four young authors and four talented players with clever and economically inventive stagings. It's all about sex (as I increasingly expect any piece of Belgian theatre to be) against a Brussels backdrop – just the thing to bring your mother to. Or is it? The audience for *Contes* last night was pretty much wall-to-wall yooof. It felt like an extended university field trip, with much guffawing and yelping at the rather broad humour.

*Contes* works best as a device to get younger writers and actors together and its success is due to its energy and quirkiness. The plays themselves, though, are a mixed bunch. Sometimes the evening plays out as a sort of extended stand up comedy routine – then it surprises you as with the last piece in particular, played with superb understatement by Riton Liebman, a beautiful, sad little riff on a middle aged bloke's internet sex addiction and its impact on his 'real' sex life. It managed to be funny, pointed and tender which is not easy with such sticky subject matter.

All the actors are good. Ingrid Heiderschiedt does an enjoyable take on a woman finding out rather angrily about orgasm (at last!), Benoît Verhaert runs a nicely judged piece of sex conferencing and Fabrice Rodriguez is both manic and lyrical as a man whose girlfriend prefers science to sex (although the play was both the most exuberant and the least coherent). It's not sophisticated theatre and it has a cobbled-together feel; but there's talent here, and a noisy enthu-

siasm that got my juices running.

Sex is often funny on stage and *Contes* does not try to make it anything else. The kids got up my nose I must say; I'd forgotten, thank God, how 18-year-old boys find the idea of rape and torture funny. What a relief therefore that for an old codger like me the actual subject matter seemed very tame. God knows what the hormonally challenged audience would have made of something really horrible and shocking. **Andrew McIlroy**



**Fabrice Rodriguez: manic and lyrical**

**Théâtre de Poche, 1a Chaussée du  
Gymnase, Brussels, until December 31,  
Tuesdays to Saturdays, 20.30.  
Tel 02.649.17.27.**