


THE SCOTSMAN

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www.festival.scotsman.com
Festival

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
9 August 1999

Refugees

Roman Eagle Lodge

Theatre ★★★★★

In her scintillating autobiographical one-woman show, Stephanie Satie plays all the parts, including the part of herself. Despite its subject, it is a *tour de force*. It is set in an English as a Second Language classroom in New York, where Stephanie teaches refugees from Russia, Latvia, the Ukraine and Iran. There are laughs and tears, poignancy, anguish and bathos by quick turns in rapid succession.

Because Satie is a Jew (a fact pivotal to the action) there is also plenty of the energetic redolence and pithy zest of the conversational habits of her culture.

She says in the programme notes to the show that while teaching, she listened daily to stories of war, deprivation, humiliation and institutionalised sexual oppression. Her work is billed as "theatre of testimony".

Great her sophistication as both actress and playwright, then, to wring so much wry humour from Stephanie's failed attempts to keep her students at arms-length. Ironically, Stephanie is the biggest refugee of all, but through her students is reborn as who she really is.

Bonnie Lee

Until 22 August