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# Theatre Review: A Very British Lesbian Gilded Balloon, Teviot (Venue 14), Edinburgh

It is a wonderful thing to sit in the dark and let really good writing delight you.

By Kate Copstick  
Monday, 19th August 2019, 1:30 pm



Fiona Goodwin

\*\*\*\*\*This is not just good, it is writing of such skill and precision that it could have been done with a diamond cutter.

There is not one single wasted word, not one phrase that does not play perfectly – and sometimes painfully – its part in this extraordinary story of love and life, fear and finding yourself.

Even with the staging, the simplistic illustrations used deflect the emotions of the situations they portray just enough to prick but not stab your feelings.

There is no actual imperative to be lesbian (or even lesbian-ish) to be enthralled, although it helps. Fiona Goodwin – for the Very British Lesbian, 'tis she – takes us, by the heart, through a childhood and teenage so mired in guilt and confusion that she became a Born Again Christian and ended up being exorcised by a gangster pastor and a woman with elephantitis. Years of denial (and therapy) led to decades in the closet (and therapy), interspersed with a series of doomed love affairs with variously unavailable women.

And one non-love affair with a too-available man. Goodwin perfectly matches the writing with an exquisitely nuanced, pared-back performance.

It is, as mentioned in the title, all Very British.

But her lesbian heart in hiding left her endlessly running away, across the world – to Italy and Honduras, London and L.A – trying to avoid Mz Right and consequently meeting several Mz Wonderful But Ultimately Wrong.

There is so much laughter in Goodwin's hour that it is a tribute to her as both writer and performer that it does not for one second diminish the hurt that is felt, it simply refuses to let things get either angry or maudlin.

Which makes this a memorably powerful hour. And very British.