

## Back Where We Started

Robo Productions—Planetarium

This was one of three outstanding productions that I saw on Tuesday. I've been a big fan of RobYn Slade (not a typo) since I saw her first script. As a writer she has a keen eye for the right detail and a sharp sense of drama. As a performer she has a unique stage presence and impeccable timing. Her partner, Shelby Bond, has great chemistry on stage. He shows some range compared to his other show, *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Sex*, etc. He's a very talented comedian, but in this show he played the serious scenes with depth and sensitivity.

Put together, the two actors created a realistic world that was not diminished by the non-traditional staging and minimal props. A length of rope is a metaphor for their relationship, and becomes other objects as required. The only other props are two chairs and some stage makeup. Despite the unusual staging, this show presented the heightened sense of real life that great theatre should present, and speaking as someone with over 40 years in the same relationship, I can say the play did a remarkable job of portraying the trials and joys of living with someone you love. *Back Where We Started* has everything you could want in a Fringe show, and left me longing for Slade's next play.

Kevin Longfield

You enter the theatre to the sight of RobYn Slade and Shelby Bond already tied by a thick black rope, back to back. This play was recommended to me by a young Fringer who said she just LOVED it. I must be too old and jaded but couldn't say the same. I expected more from these two, though how they found time to rehearse I don't know. Last I heard they lived in separate countries. I liked the creative use of the rope as a constant throughout all the scenes. I also liked the concept that romantic blows left permanent, visible bruising. The chemistry between the two is amazing and their delivery is



Photo Credit: Diiverse.com

*All fifteen-year-old girls' fathers probably feel this way once in a while. At least in Chipmunks Ate My Bike!*

smooth. I found myself laughing out loud in several spots. I do think this is for those looking for a romantic romp that won't make them think.

Lisa Campbell

*Back Where We Started* is a delightful piece of great onstage chemistry between name performers RobYn Slade and Shelby Bond. It's a simple plot centered around the sort of problems that occur every day between lovers, treated (and poked fun at) in a very human way, one with which the entire audience can connect. The story arc is clever, and there are continuous laughs to be had at the couple's expense. You are likely to feel a chord or two being struck if you have ever had a relationship in serious need of a reboot. This is a gem of a show because it is not merely a solid performance; it is a theatre lesson in disguise. Any student of the art form whose creative process has not yet overcome a reliance on external elements needs to attend,

and watch what a couple of professionals are able to do with just two chairs and a length of rope.

John Chase  
Merlyn Productions

## Frenzy Saves Your Brain

Frenzy Productions—Planetarium

This critic just wanted to get out of the heat. Where else to give my Fringe-fried brain a rest but to go see *Frenzy Saves Your Brain*. It started out with these four guys in white smocks, and degenerated into various characters as they took over their audience's brains. There were some hilarious skits; I particularly liked an air band send-up of The Cure. These guys have some great chemistry and a good feel for sketch comedy along with good instincts for clever prop usage and smart wardrobe changes.

Keep it up, guys, and you will develop into fine actors some day. But I seriously hope some of you can rise above this genre of acting, as fun and funny as it may be!

Kevin Campbell

## Alphonse

Theaturtle—Gas Station

*Alphonse*, in short, is a story about imaginations, one boy's in particular. This one-man show consists of so many different characters, you'd suppose that it might be difficult to follow, but it wasn't. It was brilliantly acted, and every character was made very clear by different movements and characteristics. A beautiful show. Do more than consider going to see it. See it!

Arden Pruden

