

PLAYFUL PASTICHE AND FLAMBOYANT DANCING – BUT WHY?

[Prodigious Pilot](#)

Yours Truly Productions

at The Transmission Room, Auckland

Until 21 Oct 2009

Reviewed by Carol Brown, 21 Oct 2009

Descending to below ground level and the dark, beer scented venue of the Transmission Rooms, for the much talked about return of Yours Truly Productions, we wait for something to happen in a cabaret-style setting.

A pre-planned botched beginning is followed by a series of fake formal announcements, one from a cardboard cut-out banana faced figure, and the other an onscreen air hostess performing an instructional video.

Playing across different registers of performance, the company, assemble a loosely structured dance event around a song list of iconic pop songs and the children's classic, 'Go Bananas'.

Billy Idol's 'Dancing with Myself' becomes the anthem as this almost all-female company negotiate rites of femininity and perform a series of short dances. But a desire to dance does not a dance show make. Trawling through the back catalogue - Joy Division, Gwen Stefani and Moby amongst others (none of which are credited in the programme) - for triggers, they get stuck on sentimental reminiscences of kissing in princess frocks, and drunken hen parties.

As if this wasn't sweet enough, chocolate banana cake is passed around at interval, and the recurring humour of a cardboard cut-out figurine with banana face intersects each half.

Framed by an in-flight video, 'how to dance go bananas', and concluding with the fully embodied version of this as a chorus of women resembling cheerleaders joyfully chant and dance to the children's rhyme, the work comprises a series of dances loosely combined and dramaturgically shaped.

Hen parties, a bride and her bridesmaids, a Cleopatra and Anthony dance (the singular appearance of a male dancer), a solitary woman dancing erratically to Joy Division with her head phones on, become vignettes which explore and expose freedoms, longings, fantasies and possible futures.

Playing on the girls' night out of the hen party, the performers infiltrate the audience and set up a series of photographs. Although they play on the bad taste of the drunken hen party, there is little

interrogation of this ritual or its performance potential, other than through an acting out of its excesses. Attempts at critique, subversion and the making strange of this familiar territory, stumble as the action becomes harnessed into the dominant frames of the pop songs.

To shape a dramaturgy through these pop songs is a challenge given that they already carry significant memories and associations for many in the audience. *Prodigious Pilot* has a go at meeting these songs with their own associations, playful pastiche and flamboyant dancing but the dancing exhausts itself and we are left with their singing 'Go Bananas' as a call to action, but what for and why?

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