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NORTH WEST END UK

News, Reviews and Interviews from theatres across the UK

Velvet Determination – Greenside @ Nicolson Square

17 August 2022

Velvet Determination is an autobiographical performance about, and starring, Cynthia Shaw, detailing her experience as a pianist growing up in Colorado with aspirations of making it to New York.

Despite being the only performer on stage throughout the piece, Shaw retains the audience's attention from the get-go through both her dialogue and live piano playing. Dressed in a bright, floral dress, Shaw's costume matches her warm, friendly personality, helping the audience to tune in to her story.

Shaw is not an actor – but this is not a piece of theatre. Velvet Determination is a real story and Shaw is able to be genuine and vulnerable in such an intimate setting, something even the finest of actors struggles to get right at times.

Throughout the piece, Shaw ensures to look each member in the audience in the eye, creating a strong and lasting connection with

everyone attending. She even invites spectators to participate at various points of the performance. Again, this is no mean feat and shows she has real assurance over what she is doing without it coming across as being over-confident.

You cannot help but smile as Shaw discusses her journey from a small town in Colorado, to a tiny New York apartment and her lack of care for learning her scales and arpeggios or feel genuine sympathy for her complicated relationship with her father.

Dialogue and music are combined excellently and equally without either outshining the other. Shaw often underscores herself, managing to play perfectly while projecting text and still maintaining focus from her audience.

Cynthia Shaw's Velvet Determination is a true story, her story. The very real story of a musician chasing her dreams. I cannot fault this production. I left feeling uplifted, inspired and with the strong urge to play some piano. This show deserves a big audience!

Velvet Determination is on until the 27th of August at the Fern Studio, Greenside, Nicholson Square and tickets can be found [HERE](#).

Reviewer: Dylan Mooney

Reviewed: 16th August 2022

North West End UK Rating: ★★★★★

