

prostitute who is waiting for his sugar daddy, or, indeed, his real daddy.

There's a big bad businessman in the background (played with withering asperity by Robin Soans) who traps Lulu (Kate Ashfield) into reciting Chekhov with her togs off while auditioning for an advertising job; this leads to an Ecstasy-pushing débâcle in which Robbie (Andrew Clover) gives away the tablets in a fit of misplaced idealism and lands himself with a task of recovering £3,000.

In the play's funniest scene, we see Lulu and Robbie frantically coping with their new line in telephone sex, though nothing here approaches the exquisite sordidness of Jennifer Jason Leigh in Altman's *Short Cuts*.

With its loud techno music and neon-lettered design by Julian McGowran, the prominent quality of this engaging play is its disposable immediacy, and it should be lapped up by young audiences on its October/November tour from Bristol and Bracknell to Crawley and Bury St Edmunds.

You fall with relief on the lin-

guistic relish and sheer inspired lunacy of Ken Campbell's latest solo show, *Violin Time* (RNT Cottesloe), at which I am amazed to hear my own name uttered in the course of the Barking laureate's expository dialogue with Richard Eyre. The artistic director taunts Campbell about my part in his scooping a 1993 drama award. 'I know,' retorts Campbell. 'He and I were both in the same am dram soc in Ilford years ago - he always looks after me when he can - there's no money involved.'

The new chapter of Campbell's irresistible saga recounts his discovery of a Vietnamese violinist, Thieu-Hoa (pronounced as in 'Thieu-Hoa coffee, sir?'), who plays in the wings, sidles on and, indeed, was married in the course of this performance - or, rather, a prior one - in St John's, Newfoundland, Campbell's latest and apparently lasting true spiritual home: 'There's an entire community of comics there.'

While Thieu-Hoa visits Newfoundland and finds her husband, Campbell fails to make it to Haiphong in the agreed mys-

tical home-swap. With his bald head, false teeth (his 'Mellors'), bushy eyebrows, gleaming blue eyes, striped jumper, shopping trolley and tea-cosy headgear, he looks more like a mad-cap Magwitch than ever.

He brings his new-found Newfoundland experience to pulsating life, brushing shoulders with philosophers, ferrets, experimentalists, lie-detecting, hothouse plants and heretics, from Stamford Hill to the Languedoc. Campbell admits one-man shows might be improved by having one or two more people in them. He explains how he falls into sympathetic company: 'I'm quite shy, but if they're radiating, it's like a ferret to the meat.'

But how on earth exactly he goes from EST to West, and back via a celebration of the the Three Stooges, to the Temple of Mankind in Damanhur, is for him to explain and you to appreciate. I'm out of here.

Two fascinating revivals. Tim Supple's hot streak continues with a marvellous *Blood Wedding*, newly and flintily translated by Ted Hughes, at the Young Vic (superlative performances from Alexandra

Coveney on Violin Time

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Sun, Feb 7, 2021