

# Flailing about in a sexual shambles

**D**URING the interval, an American student summed up Kay Adshead's dreadful sex-comedy perfectly. "It sucks," she declared, "big-time!" Indeed it does. Juicy Bits purports to be a serio-comic exploration of the psychology of desire, but turns out to be a rambling, puerile mess. The script is incoherent, the acting awful, the direction cack-handed.

Adshead clearly has no idea who or what she really wants to write about, so she engineers a lot of improbable sexual and emotional shenanigans between a lot of improbable characters, in the hope that something will emerge. Nothing does, and she ends up with one contrived scenario after another, flailing repeatedly and unsuccessfully for ideas to lift her play out of the pit of idiocy.

It begins on a note of nudge-nudge salacity and goes downhill fast. Liz Sharp, an ageing, randy feminist

**Juicy Bits X**  
*Lyric Hammersmith*

**NICK CURTIS**

publisher now pushing erotica, tries to win back her eminent novelist lover Jay by commissioning him to write the definitive dirty book. She employs slinky, married market researcher Chloe, unaware that Jay has already joined Chloe's copious roster of impersonal one-night stands. Chloe's husband dotes on Liz's cleaner-cum-confidante Bella, as does an impotent tree-lover. There's a Scottish lesbian prison warder, a murderess who has decapitated 12 men called Len, and a Welsh bondage freak, none of whom adds a jot of interest to the so-called plot.

The characters are utterly unconvincing, and Adshead's desperate attempts to make their feelings seem meaningful are insultingly crass. The narrative is a shambles,



**Fluffing their cues: cast members of Juicy Bits**

and the scenes in Sarah Davey's clumsy production for Bold and Saucy TC do not so much intersect as stumble into one another.

The actors lurch around Luis Carvalho's boring, noisy rostrum set, led by Adshead herself, who sets the tone as an infuriatingly twitchy, twittery Liz. Accents falter and vanish, cues are fluffed and bad lines are spoken with leaden emphasis. As Jay, John Sergeant acts as if he's wandered in off the street, and wants desperately to wander out again. I would have

pointed him towards the exit, had I been less stunned by the sheer awfulness of his performance.

Towards the end, Adshead embarks on a last, futile tangent, embodying the put-upon Donna as the legendary "sacred prostitute" worshipped by the Incas and Aztecs. It's the last straw. I'm sure I've seen worse plays than this, but I'm damned if I could call any of them to mind at this point. Juicy Bits sucks. Big, BIG time.

● *Until 12 September. Box office: 0181 741 2311.*

Curtis Standard Juicy



Clipped By:

ianlharris

Sun, Aug 6, 2023