

Review of London-Paris-Roam! at the Paris Fringe Festival by Céline Ito.

This is a condensed English translation of the original French review that can be found on the cultural blog, Le Monde en Nous :

<http://le-monde-en-nous.fr/2016/05/25/sarah-tullamore-in-london-paris-roam-oh-my-god/>

Sarah Tullamore in « London-Paris-Roam! » : OH-MY-GOD !

Last night, Sarah Tullamore had the privilege and daunting task of opening the very first edition of the Paris Fringe Festival. She had already caught my eye at the Fringe Press Night and so I decided to go and catch the first performance of her one-woman musical show, *London-Paris-Roam!*, not knowing at all what I would see. Well, it was a great find : light-hearted, joyful, classy and as radiant as a glass of bubbly.

After globetrotting around the world, Sarah, « a woman of a certain age », finally set up shop in Paris in 1994. It's the exploration of the sheer wonder of this « dazzling town » that she recounts in one of her first songs « Oh my God Paris! », that charmed me straight away. How can we fail to identify with this « Oh my God-feeling » ? The feeling that we somehow belong in a film and with its cast without even knowing what part we're going to play ? This song touched me profoundly and also sets the tone of the show : full of humour, tenderness, emotion and reserve.

So what is this show exactly ? Well, it's a one-woman show/musical/cabaret ! Yes, it does exist ! Or maybe Sarah Tullamore has invented a new genre as I've never seen anything like it before. It's not just a succession of sketches interspersed with music, rather a real narrative progression that goes seamlessly from the spoken to the sung word. Exactly as a real musical should.

On stage, all this tall, slim, classy, infinitely likeable blonde with a glint in her eye and perfect diction needs is a couple of boxes, a chair and a discreet but talented pianist: John Florencio. Sarah arrives, a wineglass in hand and sets the tone straight away : nothing too deep and dreary this evening. She's going to tell and sing us her story : her various adventures in Paris but also in Italy and Japan; her romance with the French capital and in particular with a gourmet (gourmand?) Latin Lover that alas will come to an end one day because "Paris dreams don't always last". After so many years spent in our capital she takes stock in front of us. And WITH us, even, because she

breaks the fourth wall to speak to the audience directly and to associate us with her story, a story that many of us too can identify with. Is it not time to take « one step forward » ?

Sarah Tullamore reels off her souvenirs and musings alternating stand-up and song with a singular ease and we can only imagine the work she's put in to make it all seem so easy. Her sense of timing (bravo for the French-English rhyming sketch) gives undeniable appeal to her tantalising descriptions of Italian or Japanese food, to her funny anecdotes on Chinese horoscopes, the ins and outs of shamanism or her considerations on the passing of time for all women. She has fun with Parisian clichés (« The Bill »), but we feel behind this gentle mockery such love for our capital that it's easy to forgive her lampooning (unpleasant waitresses in restaurants !). Director Frédéric Baptiste's staging is simple and effective, hinged on the charisma of the actress, pleasing lighting and original music that is a real hit.

Sarah Tullamore made a point of having original songs for this show and with this aim in mind worked in close collaboration with the composer James Burn who brought her ideas to musical life. The result is wonderful : swing, jazziness, pop... with that little « touch of Broadway », this slight musical and dramatic accent that is difficult to describe but makes all the difference between Anglo-Saxon and French musical theatre. This blend of styles creates a gentle nostalgia that will thrill the more sensitive souls in the audience. And what a voice !

Discovering this sincere and openhearted artist was an utter delight. *London-Paris-Roam!* is not the sort of show we're used to seeing in France so it's wonderful for her and for us that the Paris Fringe selected it. Sarah will be performing a second time this coming Sunday and then will head off to Edinburgh where her show has been programmed too.

So I urge you to go and check out Sarah and her show. The theatre was sold out and bravos filled the air as the final lights faded. Sarah Tullamore loves Paris. Well, Paris loves her back. Cheers!

Céline Ito.