

Fringe Review: Spirituality and sexuality converge and contend in “Christianity Made Me a Slut”

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Elizabeth Blue (Photo Credit: Romy Rinke)

Elizabeth Blue playfully describes one woman’s exploration of spirituality and sexuality as “Liz” in ***Christianity Made Me a Slut*** — and perhaps her discovery that these don’t have to be mutually exclusive. In twelve brief scenes this charming one-woman show chronicles her protagonist’s journey through crucial moments of her biography. From finding community and guidance in a strict evangelical church to trying to find a semblance of that in sex-positive seminars and “yoni-egg workshops” on Bali, Liz lets us be witness of the conversations that let her grow up into the woman that she is.

In a rapid non-linear sequence of glimpses into episodes of her life we learn about her story and development: her first chaste, romantic relationship with a fellow Christian who is as inexperienced as herself and perhaps even more inhibited; her introduction to New York’s decadent club scene; and an intimate conversation with her mother, among others. Blue’s

performance is charismatic and seductive and she impressively demonstrates her character's vulnerability, while never losing a certain ironic distance to her. Throughout the play Liz retains her girlishness and an aura of naive bewilderment even as she builds up more confidence to increasingly take the initiative while flirting with a growing number of lovers. The tone stays light and funny even through her moments of doubt and worry about potentially acquired STDs.



Elizabeth Blue (Photo Credit: Romy Rinke)

We only ever hear her side of those exchanges which leaves it to the audience's imagination what her conversation partners might have to say. Her guilt and sometimes shame become almost palpable, but despite the satirical undertones, Blue treats her character with care and with respect. Her prayers and concerns seem sincere, if at times caricatured. Few would be able to state their desire for "the throbbing penis of god" and still maintain an air of innocence as Blue does.

The non-linear storytelling leaves the spectator wondering about the order of the events and it proves a surprisingly effective tool in captivating the audience's attention from beginning to end. While it is never quite clear at which point in time we are in the character's progress, it all comes together once we have all the parts and can piece the together in one tableau.



Elizabeth Blue (Photo Credit: Romy Rinke)

It is up to the audience's view on promiscuous women to determine whether Liz's evolution from devout Christian to the titular "slut" is an improvement or a downfall. Blue's playful attitude and the tongue-in-cheek performance might suggest the former but as a whole the show is non-judgmental. The final act, which feels slightly disconnected from the rest of the plot, then shows a jaunty and carefree Liz dancing on stage, cheerfully taunting and flirting with audience members of all sexes.

"WHO IT'S FOR"

Anyone who has ever struggled to consolidate a conservative upbringing with their own desire to love whom and how they want.

Drink suggestion:

A bottle of very sweet prosecco would well accompany this bubbly little tale.



Elizabeth Blue presents *"Christianity Made Me a Slut"*
at the 29th St-Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival

Performances: June 6 – 16, 2019

Venue: 01 – Le Ministère

4521 Saint-Laurent, Montréal, H2T 1R2

Admission: \$10 – 12 | Ages 18+

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