

## PIG

by Tim Luscombe

### Press reaction to the world premiere at the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto, September 2013.

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<http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/shows/pig/>

The language is hard hitting, grotesque and breathtakingly poetic and elegant all at the same time.

Formidable, elegant, unexpected, beautiful.

You will not come out of the play uninvolved. Tim Luscombe in Pig is Sarah Kane x 2. I thought it was stunning.

**Lynn Slotkin, CUIT**

The material is gay-specific – though it would resonate with any human being who can handle the explicit gay sexuality – and incessantly thoughtprovoking. Those arriving expecting shock value won't be disappointed when they find themselves having to think – and flinch – on seeing their own dark hearts reflected.

Much has been made of the shocking and daring nature of Pig, but it should also be noted that it has moments that are excruciatingly funny. Playwright Tim Luscombe weaves words into a heightened poetry of scatological brilliance and the resulting laughs are those lacerating ones where one is forced to confront one's own foibles.

There should also be no question that Pig is a highly literary piece, sumptuously written, dealing with subject matter that could be considered shocking, but is really just ahead of its time.

**Drew Rowsome, My Gay Toronto**

A play that keeps an unrelenting focus on the dark side of gay life while spinning a fable that has the ugly slice of a knacker's knife, the force of a grenade, and the allure of intriguing, unsettling nightmarish reality. An urgent, sometimes hysterical rebuke to what is normally considered gay theatre. Luscombe's play refuses the sentimentality of the conventional gay play – an As Is or The Normal Heart, for instance – as it keeps its harsh gaze on males in civil and uncivil relationships. Pig is about piling destruction and death on desire and despair. It is in revolt against generally accepted norms of morality and sexuality as decreed by establishment society.

It is admirable for throwing dignity to the winds and for challenging an audience to accept it on its own terms as it gazes into the depths of human hell without any promise of heaven.

**Keith Garebian, Stage and Page**

With material this hard-hitting, you need a bit of levity, [but PIG] delivers lots of bons mots.

**Glenn Sumi, Now Magazine (4 stars)**

It succeeds brilliantly at ripping apart the idea of what is normal, what is sex and what is a relationship in such dramatic fashion, that days later you'll still be wondering if you can ever rebuild these constructs in your head again. Very real and very terrifying.

**Noah Campbell, Songs and Cigarettes**

It will bore no one. Not that it isn't without humour. The show benefits from relieving the inherent tension in this work with hilarity and portraits of outrageous characters.

Certainly the audience applauded enthusiastically. Personally the show left me stunned. This is an important ground-breaking work, a milestone in queer theatre, that provokes and challenges like good theatre should provoke.

**Bob Leahy, Positive Lite**

Shocking, disturbing, moving and completely brilliant. Fast-paced and multidimensional, raw and ruthless. What Luscombe does best is focus on the humanity behind many of the more unspoken and hidden elements of gay sexuality.

Most certainly this play is moving and a work that pushes the boundaries of theatre and concepts of sexuality; it is worth seeing.

**Brian Cauley and Andrea Wrobel, Toronto Social Review**

## Reactions to the play prior to production:

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It's incredibly inventive, formally and thematically, and holds its gaze with unusual tenacity and confidence. I think it's a fierce, brave piece. The complex morality and dependencies in the relationships between Pig, Knife and Larry, in particular, are very interesting, as is the refusal to specify the motivations of the characters. There are some vivid and well-observed moments in the play, and its study of the pursuit of identity in a world of complicated exchange between reality and fantasy is demanding and original.

Dominic Cooke, Royal Court Theatre

It is extremely skilful and intense – and ventures into territory no one else, that I know anyway, is even thinking about in the theatre. On all those accounts, it's admirable. And it builds powerfully. A tough read but a riveting one. Obsession, of course, is what theatre is all about – and what did the managements make of *Women Beware Women* when that first turned up?

David Lan, Young Vic Theatre

I like the way the play is conceived – the three parallel storylines and three actors playing ten characters – which gives the play a real sense of scope and range. I also really like the idea of the 'bug chasing'. I found it very moving. There's no doubt of the play's merits.

Roxana Silbert, Paines Plough

It's incredibly accomplished; slick, witty, sophisticated and waspishly astute in its observations and depictions of its characters and their tribulations.

I really like the way you write, and though this play presents aspects of life that are frequently venal, unpleasant, disturbing and downright tragic, you create a theatrical form and flow that eases the passage through the narrative.

Nina Steiger, Soho Theatre

The more I read it the more substantial it becomes. I know nothing about drugs, and that didn't seem to be a barrier between me and the characters. I know about love and

marriage, that was my way in. What got me was them all revolving around the true Romantic idea of love unto death. Which is an idea that never goes away as far as I'm concerned. The dialogue crackles where it should and also sags where it should, which I like. Larry, Harry and Barry are great, and great counterpoints to the "boys". They all seem like really good parts, really playable. I hope someone will see how classy it is.

Neil Bartlett, Writer / Director

It's terrifically deft and very courageous with form. The pace is cracking and the dialogue sharp.

Josie Rourke, Bush Theatre

I think this play is extraordinary. While it reads like a purging - like an artist dealing with ideas - it is not musing or exploring. It has perspective. It's like a Burning. The chaos is the soul of it - and could only have been written by someone who knows their medium and form intimately and instinctively. I think it's incredibly exciting. It's very sophisticated. And I think it's really good at making the action immediate. It's accomplished and complex and intelligent and courageous. I think it is magnificent. It is a vertiginous example of what Tim Luscombe is capable of. It has real elegance and economy. There are so many really clever and then un-hammered touches - so sophisticated. I think it would be amazing to direct. And a gift for the actor. I think it is an incredible piece of literature.

Federay Holmes, Writer/Actor

I loved the sub-Pirandellian vortex and found the blending of life/art/fantasy/reality fascinating. The depiction of the hopelessness of the writing process hits one just where it should. The disintegration of Joe/Stevie's relationship and Harry's character line are written so strongly. Very poignant stuff. It is almost impossible to believe that such a world exists. What was very clear to me is that the piece is written with a very confident, daring voice and it reaches for an uber-dark, almost uncomfortable-to-watch territory.

Michael Gieleta, Director