

TIME OUT LONDON

Critics Choice ****

NEW END THEATRE Fringe

When David Rhodes was a boy, he tells us, blusher brush in hand, he and his friend liked to play 'dress up'; their parents were horrified, but here he is 40 years later, still at it. Now, however, he does it in public, and as he dons various outfits to tell us the secrets of a variety of modern Jews, his issues with privacy take on heft and definition.

There's Clarinda, whose soldier husband seduced her by letter; an Orthodox man haunted by the uncles who died in the Holocaust; and a young gay Sephardi from Antwerp, whose stories of the Marranos – Iberian Jews forced to convert in the fifteenth century – could have kept me listening all evening. And Rhodes' ability to talk frankly about his own life as the closeted son of an abusive Freudian psychiatrist, then switch instantly and convincingly into another person, is extremely impressive.

With few props, he takes us deep into six lives, only one of which – his – is intended to be publicly available. Why these people, in particular? Perhaps the point is that they are not particular; we all have secrets, and Rhodes wants to purge their poison. For this psychiatrists' son, talking is always a cure. Daddy may have been a homophobic bully, but his little boy still takes him at his word.

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