

Edinburgh Fringe 2016 Review: Eurohouse

Bertrand Lesca and Nasi Voutsas prove perfecting simplicity can make for captivating theatre. [Amy Gibbons](#) reviews

Thursday 25 August 2016



Image: The Other Richard

★★★★☆

M&Ms, gymnastics and Fleetwood Mac are just a handful of quirky elements that make up Bertrand Lesca and Nasi Voutsas's *Eurohouse*, a troubling and extremely topical comment on the economic crises of the EU in its most vulnerable hour to date. Written and performed by just the two men: Lesca (French) and Voutsas (Greek), this eclectic production explores Europe's fractured relationship with Greece through poignant metaphor, not once explicitly mentioning Europe by name (other than quietly in song) until its conclusion. Reducing countries' relations to the movements of two individuals, Lesca and Voutsas are able to touch people in a way no amount of statistics could; mass corruption is exposed on a bare stage as one man loans and takes from another, and something disturbing clicks in every mind in the room as, a broken shell, the latter finds himself trapped in the building - not by tangible barriers, but 'good sense'.

The show progresses through a number of short scenes that ebb and flow with energy. The two men start off in relative harmony, before the Frenchman launches into a haunting speech beginning: "Last night I had a dream, and you were all there with me, holding hands." The two dance together, and in a particularly disturbing turn of events we witness a gift of chocolate from Lesca to Voutsas, which is later revealed to be an obscure kind of loan. On consuming his gift, Voutsas is encouraged to vomit up his 'debts', as Lesca asks poignantly: "Where are they? I know you ate them. But where are they now?"

Later themes of cultural appropriation and the collapsing illusion of a harmonious relationship between

the two are met with an escape attempt on Voutsas's part, who has been stripped down to his boxer shorts. The disintegration of the 'mutually beneficial' union is evident in Voutsas's countenance, who from early on in the production looks downcast and often distraught.

Only at the end, when the pair have made attempts at reconciliation, is the performance explained. Following a pitiful attempt by Voutsas to recreate Lesca's account of his earlier dream, the 2000 Olympic opening ceremony in Athens is projected on the grotty wall of The Demonstration Room, in which Lesca's vision comes to life. Now we see how the Greek identity has apparently been stolen: absorbed and retold. Black slides with a plain white text appear: 62 per cent of Greece's population voted against the bailout in 2015; following reconsideration and acceptance of a payment, just 5 per cent went to the Greek state; the remaining €220bn was invested in French and German banks. At the back of the stage, in the shadow of the slides, Voutsas pumps Fleetwood Mac's 'Go Your Own Way' through his headphones. Then he collapses, head in hands, as the lights go out.

At the beginning of the show Lesca and Voutsas requested that everyone hold hands for a few seconds to make a chain, insisting on an unbroken tether between every person in the audience. Now, we all sit in silence. 'Safer IN', it seems, is more complicated than we once thought.

Eurohouse is something uniquely powerful, lacking only perhaps a little more coherence and general polishing. The Europe conversation is crucial but drowned in cliché and rhetoric, and so by avoiding explicitly mentioning the problem by name, the pair find a compelling channel for their voices.



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