

on love



Mick Gordon crowns his sweet reign as The Gate's Artistic Director with an exhilarating account of love in its many guises. Exemplifying his mentor Peter Brook's vision of the stage as an empty space, Gordon has stripped the Gate's auditorium bare. There's no set, just a battered-looking wooden platform, surrounded by abandoned boards and stuffed bin liners. The window black-outs have been removed, allowing the real world to provide a nocturnal backdrop.

On Love is a heap of vignettes drawn from the testimonies of friends and strangers, which Gordon has moulded together into an adventure playground of the heart. Wearing casual clothes, four actors relay intimate stories to our faces or into pocket dictaphones. The format consciously recalls TV docusoaps and chat shows, but the effect is neither brash nor exploitative.

The delivery is jaunty, a touch earnest, always down-to-earth. Hesitations and grammatical wrong- turnings are rendered so exactly it's as though the revelations are poring out new-minted. There are some fit-inducingly funny moments and profoundly sad tales of bygone first love and companionship divided by death.

The articulate outpourings come up against the ineffable nature of this mysterious force which threads through existence from beginning to end. And what an inspired, and inspiring, parting shot.