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Dispatches from The Fringe – A Dead Requiem

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The Lost Hours by Maurice Kelleher
Maurice Kelleher The Lost Hours

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Rating: ★★★★★

Entering the Lir for *The Lost Hours* by Maurice Kelleher, the first thing that strikes you is three women seated in funereal silence in the front row. Dressed in sixties attire, the sixties motif is reinforced by a haunting soundscape, a sort of ambient Brian Eno meets an upbeat Petula Clark. Presently the three arise in unison and march slowly to the stage. In what follows one executes a series of dance routines alternating with another who sings a selection of sixties classics, whilst the third sits motionless for the duration. In between, garbled voices recite their experiences of coming to terms with the Moors murders in the 1960s.

Described as theatre meets dance meets ritual, *The Lost Hours* asserts that it is a hymn to the abandoned and outcast, that it's about remembrance and defiance and honouring a forgotten victim. The victim in this instance being Edward Evans, victim of killers Moira Hindley and Ian Brady

in 1965. However noble its intention, *The Lost Hours* did not succeed in achieving its goal, emerging instead as a dark, sombre production steeped in detached, self-seriousness and little by way of originality.

Spread over forty minutes, the dance sequences by an unidentified dancer were the most successful aspect, except when dancing in the dark. Repeated patterns of movement were elaborated on and were visually arresting at times. These alternated with songs from the sixties sung by Carol Anne McGowan who sat, Elvira like, cradling a microphone. Each song was delivered in the same colourless manner, lifeless and drained of emotion.

Throughout, it felt like not enough thought had gone into the production. Reinterpreting emotive classics like Cilla Black's version of *Anyone Who Had A Heart*, and Roy Orbison's, *It's Over*, in a limiting, deadpan fashion did not reveal anything new and failed to serve either the songs, the singer or the production well. A short video sequence looping black and white images from the 1960s was not evocative enough. The projection of text onto the wall informing us what the songs were not about seemed to be attempting to juxtapose their enduring memory with the forgotten victims and their families. Whilst a clever idea, it wasn't clever or evocative enough.

Despite its high aspirations, *The Lost Hours* felt like a sixties themed, karaoke night hosted by hard core Goths. When the final bow was taken we had learnt very little about the victims, forgotten or otherwise. If *The Lost Hours* refers to the hours waiting for news about the victims or the hours, and years, since their death, it was impossible to tell. And sadly, in this sombre and self serious production, impossible to care.

The Lost Hours by Maurice Kelleher runs as part of the [Tiger Dublin Fringe](#) at The Lir Academy, Studio 1 until Saturday, September 20th

Doors open 6.30 p.m.

Tickets €14.00 Concessions €12.00

For more information go to <http://fringefest.com/festival/programme>



Chris O'Rourke
Tulsa Theater Examiner

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