

The Evening Standard, 2000

Dirty talk in the women's camp, Tourette's Diva, BAC, Battersea , Tom Sutcliffe

Tourette's Diva starts out clean. Lamp-post Lucy Stevens and sturdy little Lore Lixenberg sing the Our Farther virtuously in pure two-part invention. But Mrs Lixenberg's breast armour is like a pair of coiled phallic snakes. Her lipstick and eye make-up are "sorceress" black, her choker agate. Ms Stevens (the daughter diva) is less tightly cased in black velvet bodice and gathered silk skirt. Composer/pianist Richard Thomas's wittily crafted music is sometimes sub-John Adams, sometimes Brittenesque, sometimes Donizetti off the rails. On the phrase "As we forgive those who trespass against us", music and divas life off like a heaving hot-air balloon into the clouds of obscene whimsy and coruscating coloratura. Best diversion along the way is the tight-lipped fury of dancer Omar F Okai, black, amazingly supple, an own brand of camp. Banned "Anglo-Saxon" sex terms become sung mantras in this literary-musical gang rape. Sixty minutes of dirty talk take energy when nothing achieves congress.

Ms Lixenberg's gimlet eyes undress her audience. Ms Steven's warm mezzo is more reassuring. Laughter greets Ms L drumming up business "We are available for children's parties-also assisted suicide send-offs."

The best jokes are gloriously rotten and silly. The secret is the skill in the music and text, and alertly calculated singing. "London's burning," chimes one. "Good," chimes back the other. "Charing Cross." "Kennington in a better mood." "Wish I was gay," signs Ms Lixenberg, relaying blubbery male orgasms. "In fact I am. I am a gay man who is straight, with a vagina. My boyfriend used to drive a Saab."

The show is a pre-emptive strike-back against drag-queenery by two extremely camp (genuine) females with voices and withering charisma. Whither next for this talented bunch? Further OTT, surely.