

DON'T MISS IT:
Shun-kin
Picture by Tsukasa Aoki



EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE BEST SHOW

PREVIEW

A DISAPPEARING NUMBER AND SHUN-KIN THE BARBICAN THEATRE

IT'S A while away yet, but as with all the most anticipated cultural events in London, best to book months in advance.

When Simon McBurney's theatre group Complicite announce a new show, it's one of those moments.

Entitled *Shun-kin*, their latest play is inspired by two 1933 texts by popular Japanese novelist Jun'ichiro Tanizaki.

It may sound a stretch, but if there's one thing Complicite can do well, it's take an extremely

complex, multi-layered theme and turn it into a theatrical masterpiece as easy to digest as a mainstream cinematic experience.

The difference lies in the richness of food for thought.

Last year, Complicite's *A Disappearing Number* wove the theme of interconnectivity within the universe; the relationship between a present day couple and that of early 20th-century mega-mathematicians G H Hardy and Srinivasa Ramanujan.

Such was the success that after picking up the Best New Play at The Laurence Olivier Awards 2008, it has returned for another run at the Barbican next week.

If any tickets are left you can try now and buy later for *Shun-*

kin in January – but I wouldn't take the risk.

● *A Disappearing Number*, by Complicite, is at the Barbican Theatre from Friday, October 10 until Saturday, November 1. £12-40. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, 2.30pm on October 18, 25 and 30, and November 1. Captioned performance: Saturday, October 25, 2.30pm. Call 08451 207 550. See www.barbican.org.uk/bite

● *Shun-kin*, by Complicite, is at the Barbican Theatre from January 30 until February 21, 2009. Bookings for non-Barbican members begins October 9.

Christian McLaughlin



POP'S GLOOMY LITTLE PRINCESS

REVIEW

POLLY SCATTERGOOD THE LUMINAIRE, KILBURN HIGH STREET SEPTEMBER 24

TWO YEARS ago the BRIT School was a little known, albeit respected, arts school in Croydon. Now it's become something of a phenomena, with its alumni topping charts across the globe.

It's spawned the likes of Adele, Kate Nash, Leona Lewis, Amy Winehouse and plenty more. So many, in fact, that BRIT-pop is on the verge of becoming its own genre. It's helped by the fact that its graduates have been so vocal in their praise of the school, but one young madam is having none of it.

Despite claiming she wrote more than 800 songs while she was at the school, she's remained tight-lipped about her time there and is far from the glossy, polished stage school starlet we've come to expect.

There are no photos of her crawling around Camden, no bitchy

WITH ALUMNI INCLUDING LEONA LEWIS AND LILY ALLEN, THE BRIT SCHOOL'S BEEN ON A ROLL IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT. **HELEN CLARKE** ENCOUNTERS AN INTRIGUING BRIT GRADUATE WHO'S FAR FROM THE NORM

blogs laying into her contemporaries. Instead a painfully shy, Cassie-from-Skins-like tip toes on stage, looking like it's the last place in the world she wants to be.

Flanked by her band of skinny-jeaned indie boys, a nervous smirk spreads across her face as she tucks her hair behind her ear and gets down to business. Her voice is startling – she sounds like she's on the verge of a breakdown, as she skips between breathy whispers and glass-shattering squeals. Messy and unpolished, kooky and ethereal... call it what you will, but you wouldn't expect it from this pretty, blonde doll-like creature. Force-fed a diet of Sylvia Plath, Kate Bush and Tori Amos, she's got a haunting, gothic edge which is as unnerving as it is compelling.

"My doctor says I've got to sing a happy tune," she purrs, menacingly, at the end of new single *I Hate The Way*.

A PJ Harvey-esque dissection of a failed relationship, it's her third single, following crowd favourite *Nitrogen Pink* and her low-key 2005 release, *Glory Hallelujah*.

She takes to the piano for *I've Got A Heart* – "Erm, this is a song that I wrote and I, erm, recorded it at home," she stutters, before giving away copies of a self-recorded CD.

It's not cheerful stuff, but there's a light mood in the room – it's hard to feel gloomy when watching her. Her Kate Bush theatrics and doe-eyed naivety are endearing; she looks out of place – like a little girl dumped in the middle of a dark cloud.

A curious oddball – a pop princess of the future.