

# the COPENHAGEN post

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by Ben Hamilton

## CPH STAGE Performance Review: Mr Tesla Played



The performance is adaptable to anywhere, providing there is a window for the pigeon.  
(photo: Lucas Alexander & Lauge Felix Black)

# **Mr Tesla Played**

## **Why Not Theatre Company**

Duka, the loving matriarch of a 1860s ethnic Serbian household; the American author Mark Twain, weeping at the life story of his new acquaintance from eastern Europe; the family cat whose stroking stoked the birth of electricity; a New York pigeon tip-tapping on the window and then the heart of its saviour and one true love; and Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb and elephant killer, whose 99 percent perspiration couldn't be more in contrast to the 100 percent inspiration of this play's protagonist.

All these characters and more came alive in the actions, gestures and facial expressions of actor Nathan Meister at Teatret Ved Sorte Hest yesterday evening in his monologue portrayal of the inventor Nikola Tesla in the Why Not Theatre Company pop-up production of 'Mr Tesla Played', a relatively new play from the Serbian dramatist Tanja Mastilo that would also work brilliantly on radio.

### **Stripped down, suited up**

Meister's eyes fizzed with electricity as he illuminated the different ages of one of recent history's most intriguing and important men, effortlessly beginning the story as a convincing 86-year-old man (with only the aid of a walking stick) in a New York hotel room, before taking us back almost a century to the village in which he grew up.

A transformative, ongoing costume change skillfully helped the actor portray the inventor's life, as he stripped down and then suited up, complete with moustache, to recount a life of servitude to the people of the world.

## **An audio masterclass**

As you would expect from a pop-up production, the set can pretty much be packed into a suitcase, but in the foyer of the theatre, it fitted seamlessly in with the MGM photo library adorning the walls.

A masterclass in sound production provided atmospherics integral to the overall effect of one man's connection with a world that we take for granted today, but back then so many could not appreciate.

## **Electric on stage**

The title of the play, we learned in the closing moments, was also the unofficial epitaph of an inventor who spurned a fortune to make the maximum possible impression on humankind.

Meister may have been alone in his portrayal of this giant of science, but his electric chemistry on stage was clear to everyone to behold.

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Plays at: Teatret ved Sorte Hest

**WhyNotTheatre.dk**