

DO I LOOK LIKE A REFUGEE?

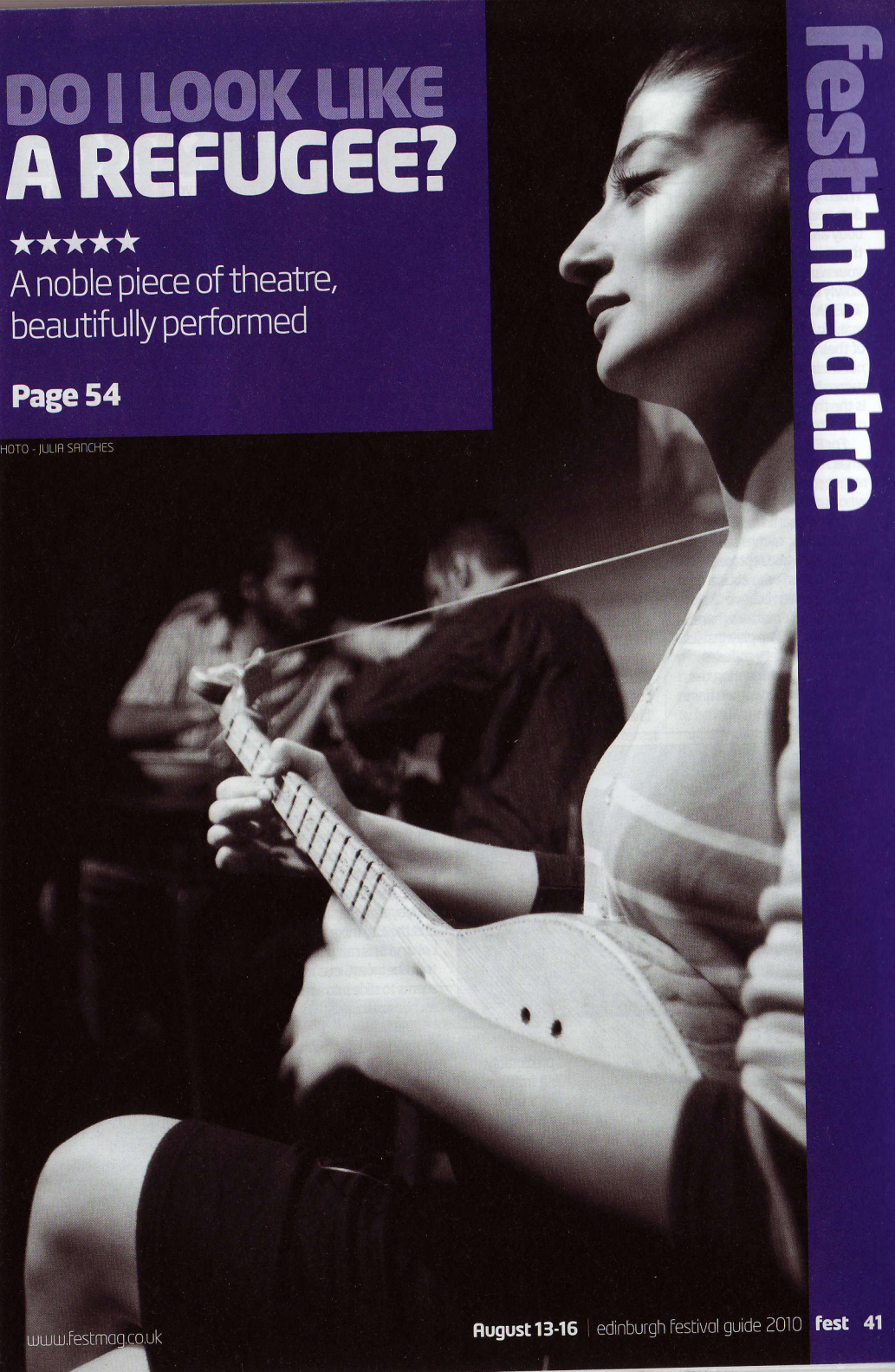
★★★★★

A noble piece of theatre,
beautifully performed

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PHOTO - JULIA SANCHES

fest
theatre





Do We Look Like Refugees?!



Do We Look Like Refugees?! tells the story of South Ossetian refugees of the 2008 Georgian War. The cast, however, rather than learning lines, repeat word for word and intonation what they hear through headsets worn during the performance. On the headsets are edited recordings of interviews conducted by director Alecky Blythe at the Tserovani Internally Displaced Persons Camp.

This process gives the cast no choice but to stay absolutely true to those interviewed.

They cannot play for laughs or pathos, or colour their portrayal with their own take on a character or topic. They are also, of course, bound to the interviews' original language, so the majority of the piece is in Georgian with surtitles. The result, perhaps surprisingly, is extremely elegant; the actors appear unconstrained and the irrepressible humour of these downtrodden people shines through.

Folksongs punctuate the interviews; performed by the cast in unpolished five-part harmony, they are a poignant symbol of the overriding importance of community to the displaced South Ossetians.

The songs stand alone, untranslated, but their meaning is clear.

By presenting characters that live outside the constraints of narrative drama, Blythe ensures that there is no theatrical distraction from the subject at hand. No time is wasted on back stories or plot devices; the focus is entirely on the pain of displacement, the injustice of poverty, and the human ability to overcome these trials. *Do We Look Like Refugees?!* is a noble piece of theatre, beautifully performed. [Jo Caird]

**Assembly @ George Street,
11:35am - 12:30pm, 5-30
Aug, not 12, 23, £5.00**