


THEATRE REVIEW

Can't Pay? Won't Pay! 

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Penned by the great Italian satirist Dario Fo in 1974, *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!* remains remarkably prescient. Handled with relish by Bristol's Roughhouse Theatre, this farce about the consequences of a free-falling economy opens with housewife Antonia returning from the supermarket where an excited crowd, frustrated by constant price hikes, has liberated goods from the shelves before fleeing from the police. Moira Hunt makes a brilliantly irascible Antonia, though her frantic pace of the first ten minutes or so could do with slowing down. With the exception of the lugubrious Clive Linthorpe, who makes each of his bit parts amusingly memorable, there's a tendency in the cast to overact. It suits the almost pantomime style of the piece but playing it so much for laughs - and there are plenty of those, thanks to Fo's sharp eye for the absurd - means that the political ruminating from Antonia's hen-pecked husband, Giovanni, doesn't quite sit right. The updating of the script is inconsistent (Nectar points and Ulrika Jonsson are mentioned, but so is paying by cheque and opening tin cans with a key), and despite lots of references to being in Bristol, everyone oddly still has a very Italian name. Such things can be overlooked, however, when the evening is as enthusiastically entertaining as this.

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