

# 'You Fancy Yourself' is a one-woman tour de force

The New Stages Theatre Company lived up to its mandate of providing "an exceptional theatre experience providing the audience with illuminating works" last night with the opening of Maja Ardal's "You Fancy Yourself" at the Market Hall.

The production, directed by Mary Francis Moore, is a tour de force of characters portrayed by Ardal alone, on a stark yet effective stage set designed by Julia Tribe and illuminated by choreographed shadows and lighting by Michelle Ramsay.

Employing only a simple blanket box and no small amount of imagination, Ardal walks us through the immigrant experience of young Elsa Paul, newly arrived to the gritty streets of 1950s



By DENNIS O'TOOLE  
Theatre  
Review

Edinburgh with her Icelandic sense of mystery and legend intact.

Thrown into the rough-and-tumble of an inner-city school, Elsa runs abreast and afoul of a cast of characters that morph and change as fast as her face and gestures will allow, assimilating as best she can amidst shifting schoolyard alliances.

Young and old, male and female, the various individuals spill out of Ardal as Elsa recounts her journey of self-actualization from the jibes of her classmates: "You Fancy Your-

self!" (you're full of yourself) to the point where she is able to proclaim, in advance and avoidance of further mockery; "I fancy myself!"

En route, Elsa realizes, that indeed, "Loyalty IS Everything," and much hilar-

ity is shared on the path to that epiphany, not the least of which being the schoolgirl's proclamation that a "mirror has no imagination."

Imagination, insight and inspiration are in good supply in this production, and the opening night audience was treated to an intimate Q&A with the playwright over snacks after a standing ovation.

One can only hope that the full house continues through Sunday "You Fancy Yourself" runs at Market Hall until Sunday. Call 749-

1146 for tickets and visit [www.newstages.ca](http://www.newstages.ca) for more information.

*Dennis O'Toole is a freelance reviewer for The Examiner*



Maja Ardal