



## Theatre

### FUTUROLOGY: A GLOBAL REVUE

Corn Exchange

**BRIGHTON ★★**

A United Nations conference on climate change is underway. Seasoned delegates are concerned – but as much with who they're going to sleep with that night as with protecting their national interest, or the issue of global warming.

So far, so real life. And that's one of the problems for this black comedy from

the National Theatre of Scotland and the Suspect Culture theatre company, appearing at the Brighton Festival. The reality of the conference circuit is itself verging on the farcical. Delegates fly from all over the world to confer on international action and invariably end up with statements of intent that are meaningless.

If you're going to address this dilemma meaningfully through drama then you need to do more than parody and exaggerate, as this production does. The conference setting is a good idea, the comic potential obvious. But the hotchpotch

of sketches and superficial characters feel like they've been thrown into a narrative that lacks direction and is never fully developed.

It begins engagingly enough. The setting is Bogside City, a town that was nothing until its mayor, an empire-builder with the personality of a used car salesman, got himself an airport and conference centre. He opens the conference with a showmanlike flourish, but the shouts of protesters from outside reveal that not everybody is happy.

Patrice – a delegate from the tiny Sandwich Islands in the Pacific – makes a late

arrival. Her country is two metres high and will disappear if sea levels continue to rise. It doesn't take Patrice long to realise that nobody at the conference is ready to agree on anything, let alone take action. Well played by the Brazilian clown Angela de Castro, Patrice is one of the few faces of humanity among the paper-thin bureaucrats.

What we get in the play's second half is more of the same. It's difficult to continue caring about the characters, even Patrice.

A local entertainer, Mr Aluminium, arrives and there are some comic

moments when he reads the delegates' minds to discover that they want either to shag or to throttle each other. He then hypnotises the mayor back to an eight-year-old but this feels like a distraction from the main issues, as do the song and dance routines performed by the delegates.

In the end, we're left with the sense that the problems are so overwhelming that no one is going to do anything about them, which isn't very funny, really.

**JANE HUGHES**

Ends tomorrow  
(01273 709709)

**Farcical: Sharon Smith and Callum Cuthbertson** DAVID MCHUGH

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this

Britain: Cello Suite No 3, 2.00 Vienna Week  
Elgar: In the South, Schubert: Quartet No  
10 in E flat, Hindemith: Nobilissima Visione,  
Mozart: Symphony in A, Beethoven: Piano  
Sonata in F (Appassionata), Schoenberg:

Hippies  
11AM RADIO 4

Not so long ago hippies were regarded as oddballs  
on the periphery of society, figures of fun summed