

## Reviews

By Caroline McGinn

### Two Men Talking

Critics' Choice



*A sympathetic, imaginative account of a friendship between two gay men who share white Jewish South African roots and a sense of humour.*

Trafalgar Studios WE

June 13 – 19, 2007



The two men talking are Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Murray Nossel and New York psychiatrist Paul Browde. What they're talking about is what they share: white Jewish South African roots; homosexuality; a beautifully laid back sense of humour; and a deeply personal conviction that HIV-sufferers, by telling their stories, can humanize the face of the 'gay plague'.

More than anything, this persuasive and shapely little show is a performance of their abiding friendship. Murray and Paul act out their stories in an adroit series of anecdotes: nifty links take you from the ten-year-old schoolboy pinned to the corridor wall by bullies to the grown-up documentary maker pinned to the Jerusalem's Wailing Wall by the furious dogmatism of an elderly Rabbi.

Each man plays all the bit-parts in the other's lives: Paul hilariously provides an extra pair of arms in the episode where the student Murray, quasi-mystically stoned, stands in-front of a mirror with his girlfriend and the beautiful boy he's secretly lost his heart to, imitating a multi-limbed Hindu Goddess to the sound of Jean Michel Jarre's 'Oxygene'. The way they physically enter into each other's stories is also a brilliant dramatic format for their friendship: one of the most remarkable things about this devised piece (which alters nightly) is the depth with which the two men listen to each other; their performance invites you to see how they're long-term witnesses to each other's lives

Sincere production values and Dan Milne's quietly sympathetic direction let them speak for themselves. Whether they are bouncing round acting out their daily phone-chats as a hummed duet version of Beethoven's Minuet In G, or describing the moment of Paul's HIV-diagnosis, they're never less than totally sincere, but they're also theatrically and imaginatively much more than that.