

Inescapable

by Martin Dockery

Directed by Vanessa Quesnelle

Performed by Jon Paterson & Martin Dockery

Running time: 60 min

www.MartinDockery.com / martindockery@gmail.com

Rapid-fire comedy mixes with slow-boiling tension in this two-handed thriller. As two friends attempt to escape an annual holiday party, a puzzle slowly reveals itself, exposing the betrayals and deceptions that go hand-in-hand with a lifetime of friendship.

REVIEW EXCERPTS

BEST-OF-FEST: "A tense, **brain-twisting drama**... A tantalizingly enigmatic script and compulsively engaging performance." –Orlando Weekly

BEST-OF-FEST: "Martin Dockery is up to his old tricks again – and what **splendid** tricks they are." –Orlando Sentinel

"★★★★ **4 STARS:** Inescapable is mesmerizing... **A circular buzz saw of a play**... in the friction of the spin, it gives off tiny, glinting revelations like sparks off a metal rail. And, thanks to the intricate infrastructure devised by Dockery, a mid-life crisis story of betrayal and lost possibility emerges without getting told." –Edmonton Journal

"★★★★ **4 STARS:** Inescapable is a Mobius strip of a play that's sure to fill your inner geek with glee... A really clever script with some very tasty dialogue... An excellent opportunity to **let your brain run wild and crazy for an hour.**" –CBC

"★★★★ **4 STARS:** Inescapable is a **hilarious non-stop, high-energy, rapid-fire** 45 minute dialogue that is really about, well, nothing. A sort of Groundhog Day meets No Exit meets Waiting for Godot meets... just about anything you want." –Edmonton Sun

"A **delicious** two-dude play." –The Revue, Ottawa

"Captivating and **worth seeing multiple times.**" –Watermark, Orlando

"A consistently funny and **dazzlingly creative** piece... A winner all the way." –Capital Critics Circle, Jamie Portman, Ottawa

"★★★★ **4 STARS:** Thoroughly entertaining." –Winnipeg Free Press

"Repetition, a risky tool in drama, requires fine acting and careful timing to be effective. Both are here in spades as Dockery and Paterson dance in and out of the reality of the ties that bind and separate them. **Simply superb.**" –Capital Critics Circle, Iris Winston

"Paterson and Dockery have an **electric** rapport on stage. The dialogue is **dizzying**, the characters are **funny**, and the plot is the thing of **a hallucinogenic vision.**" –

Capital Critics Circle, Kat Fournier

"Dockery proves himself to be **a creative tour-de-force**... both a performer and a playwright who should not be missed. Inescapable is **stellar** and features thought-provoking material that does not allow for passive spectatorship." –Herd Magazine, Ottawa

"If you still need someone to tell you to check out Martin Dockery's work, you probably haven't been paying attention. Let me help you out here: **Just go!**" –New Ottawa Critics, Wes Babcock

"Inescapable is **a breath of fresh air**; hilarious, surprising, and efficient storytelling done by performers who know exactly what they're doing." –OnStage Ottawa, Valerie Cardinal

"Inescapable is a **truly remarkable** piece of theatre that relishes in its exquisitely circular nature... Intricate and brilliant." –OnStage Ottawa, Allen Mackey

"Dockery and Paterson exude an energy that **makes the hour fly by.**" –OnStage Ottawa, Robyn Lester

"Tightly written and carefully paced." –Apt613, Ottawa

"You will thoroughly enjoy [this]." –Ink 19, Orlando

Full reviews and links to the articles are below.

DISTINCTIONS FOR SHOWS BY MARTIN DOCKERY

- 2017 Outstanding New Play** –Now Magazine, Toronto, Delirium
- 2017 Best Solo Show – Drama** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Delirium
- 2017 Patron’s Pick Award** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Delirium
- 2017 Low Tech Award** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Delirium
- 2017 Andrew M. Dixon Award** –Ithica Fringe Festival, Delirium
- 2016 Best Script** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Inescapable
- 2016 Weekly Award - Best Theatre** –Adelaide Fringe Festival, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2016 Best Theatre of Adelaide Fringe** –The Advertiser newspaper, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2015 Critics Pick Best Show runner-up** –Vancouver Fringe Festival, The Exclusion Zone
- 2015 Critics Pick Best Show** –Cincinnati Fringe Festival, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2015 Critics Pick Best Show** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2015 Patron’s Pick** –Orlando Fringe Festival, The Exclusion Zone
- 2014 Critics Pick Best Show runner-up** –Vancouver Fringe, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2014 Patrons’ Pick** –Winnipeg Fringe Festival, The Surprise
- 2014 Best of Fest** –Ottawa Fringe Festival, The Surprise
- 2014 Best Original Work** –Ottawa Fringe Festival, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2014 Critics’ Choice Honorable Mention** –Ottawa Fringe Festival, Moonlight After Midnight
- 2014 Critic’s Choice Best Show** –Orlando Fringe Festival, The Surprise
- 2013 Patron’s Pick** –Winnipeg Fringe Festival, The Dark Fantastic
- 2013 Patron’s Pick** –Winnipeg Fringe Festival, The Pit
- 2012 Best of Fest** –Ottawa Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2011 Hold-Over** –Edmonton Fringe Festival, The Surprise
- 2011 CBC Award for Best Drama** –Winnipeg Fringe Festival, Bursting Into Flames
- 2011 Adelaide Critics Circle Award** –Adelaide Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2010 Pick of the Fringe** –Vancouver Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2010 Hold-Over** –Edmonton Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2010 Entire run sold-out** –Edmonton Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2010 Entire run sold-out** –Victoria Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2010 Multiple Sell Outs Award** –Rogue Festival, Wanderlust
- 2010 Best in Fest** –Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg Fringe Festival, The Bike Trip
- 2010 Best in Fest** –Orlando Sentinel, Orlando Fringe Festival, The Bike Trip
- 2010 Best Storytelling** –Beat Magazine at The London Fringe, The Bike Trip
- 2010 Hold-Over (“Hangover”)** –New York FRIGID Fest, The Bike Trip
- 2009 Best Solo Performance** –San Francisco Fringe Festival, The Surprise
- 2009 Outstanding Solo Performer** –Nominee New York Innovative Theater, The Surprise
- 2009 Outstanding Short Play** –Nominee New York Innovative Theater Awards, The Surprise
- 2009 Best of Fest** –Winnipeg Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2009 Best Original Work** –London Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2009 Impresario Award** –London Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2009 Sold Out Award** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2009 Best in Venue** –Orlando Fringe Festival, Wanderlust
- 2009 soloNOVA Breakthrough Performer of the Year** –NY soloNOVA Fest, The Surprise
- 2009 Audience Choice Award** –New York FRIGID Fest, The Surprise



Review: 'Inescapable'

By [Seth Kubersky](#) on Wed, May 18, 2016

CHOSEN BEST OF FEST BY ORLANDO WEEKLY



Have you ever gotten stuck in one of those circular arguments, where the conversation spirals around and around until your déjà vu has déjà vu? Playwright-performer Martin Dockery's *Inescapable* takes that familiar feeling and spins it into a tense, brain-twisting two-man drama.

Dockery's unnamed character is already feeling depressed and suspicious over his wife's waning affections when his best friend (played by Jon Paterson) discovers a mysterious box in his closet during a joyless holiday party. The ominous object, which may be a harmless toy or something more sinister, sends the pair down a rabbit hole of recriminations and repetitive questions that had me riveted in my seat until the final blackout.

Inescapable reminded me of a less perplexing version of the indie sci-fi film *Primer*, or a lost *Twilight Zone* episode written by Quentin Tarantino. It lacks the romantic magic-realism glow of Dockery's previous plays performed with Vanessa Quesnelle (who directed this production's rapid-fire delivery with well-balanced finesse), replacing it with testosterone-fueled propulsiveness. Thanks to its tantalizingly enigmatic script and compulsively engaging performances, *Inescapable* will have you crying, "What's in the box?" like Brad Pitt in *Seven* long after the curtain falls.

<http://www.orlandoweekly.com/Blogs/archives/2016/05/18/fringe-review-inescapable>

Review: 'Inescapable'

By Matt Palm Wed, May 17, 2016



Martin Dockery is up to his old tricks again – and what splendid tricks they are. Fans of Dockery’s work are familiar with the themes he often explores: the bending of time, life-changing moments, the longing for love, relationships that differ from how they appear at first glance.

In “Inescapable,” Dockery combines these elements differently than he has in such past Fringe successes as “The Surprise” or “Moonlight After Midnight.” Also new: Dockery has a different acting partner than regular

co-star Vanessa Quesnelle. (She directs “Inescapable.”)

Fringe-circuit veteran Jon Paterson joins Dockery in this tale of a holiday party gone awry, and his focused yet natural acting style meshes impeccably with Dockery’s amped-up energy. In the story, Dockery’s unnamed host finds an old pal (Paterson) looking at a mysterious box that he apparently found while rummaging through Dockery’s closet.

“Why were you in the closet?” Dockery asks. And asks again. And again. It’s soon clear that something unusual is going on. Dockery’s words and Quesnelle’s direction let us see this mysterious box that isn’t really there. And although the physical action doesn’t pick up much, in Dockery’s usual style as the words fly faster, and more bits of the puzzle are revealed, the tension increases.

The final reveal doesn’t have the same heart-wrenching element of surprise as previous Dockery offerings, but it more than satisfies. And what a hang-on-tight ride to get there.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/entertainment/arts-and-theater/the-artistic-type/os-inescapable-fringe-review-20160517-story.html>

INESCAPABLE - ★★★★★

Review by Liz Nichols, August 13, 2015

In this circular buzz saw of a play, by Fringe star storyteller Martin Dockery, we're trapped inside the loop of an endless argument between two old friends trapped endlessly at an endless holiday party.

The continuous Mobius loop is already spinning, fast and furious, at the outset. And Dockery and RibbitRepublic's Jon Paterson are going at it, full-throttle full-volume, returning over and over to the fact, highly inflammatory to one of them, that a mysterious box has been taken out of the closet. "Why would you do that?" cries the one. "Calm down!" — the universal rallying cry of arsonists with matches and gasoline — cries the other.

Has time stopped? Is the future to be measured in "past selves"? They realize from time to time, in a kind of horror, that they've lived this moment before, in a perspective trail of repetitions into the past: "How many times have we wondered how many times we've had this conversation?... My déjà vu has déjà vu."

Inescapable is Groundhog Day on speed, macho adrenalin by Mamet — with high-octane, expertly cross-hatched performances to match. It's not that the argument escalates; that would imply something more open-ended than Inescapable. But in the friction of the spin, it gives off tiny, glinting revelations like sparks off a metal rail. And, thanks to the intricate infrastructure devised by Dockery, a mid-life crisis story of betrayal and lost possibility emerges without getting told. Inescapable is constructed almost entirely of fragments of subtext: Loud, shouty subtext.

If this show went on for five more minutes, you'd be inclined to rush the stage, shout lemme outta here!, and give each party a good smack. As it is, Inescapable is mesmerizing.

— Liz Nicholls, as seen at the Winnipeg Fringe

<http://interactive.canada.com/Edmonton/2015/08/FringeFestival/review/Inescapable.html>



CBC

Inescapable

CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corp) by Michelle Palansky | July 16, 2015



Company: RibbitRepublic, Venue: 13 — The Purple Room



Written by Martin Dockery and performed by Dockery and Jon Paterson, *Inescapable* is a Mobius strip of a play that's sure to fill your inner geek with glee. Two men at a Christmas party find themselves having the same conversations over and over again.

"My déjà vu is having déjà vu."

Although essentially the same sets of topics, as the show progresses significant details continually add up, and against, the longtime friends.

"We're both stuck here," says one.

"Life is sticky," presciently responds the other.

A really clever script with some very tasty dialogue. It's an excellent opportunity to let your brain run wild and crazy for an hour.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/inescapable-1.3130899>



Inescapable 4/5 ★★★★★

By [Colin Maclean](#) - Monday, August 17, 2015 - La Cite Francophone – Suzanne Thibaudeau Auditorium



Two middle-aged dudes are looking at an empty table. Asks one, "God dammit! Where did you get that box?" The McGuffin in question is a small square box, invisible on the table, apparently with some instructions that nobody ever reads, and what looks like an on-off switch. What follows is *Inescapable* a hilarious non-stop, high-energy, rapid-fire 45 minute dialogue that is really about, well, nothing. A sort of *Groundhog Day* meets *No Exit* meets *Waiting for Godot* meets... just about anything you want.

Martin Dockery is a spellbinder and his intimate, autobiographical shows (*Wanderlust*) have been very popular. *Inescapable* is written by Dockery and performed by the playwright and a partner who is well known to local audiences through his many appearances at the Fringe, Jon Paterson House/*Be a Man*). The two actors are well paired as each are adept, talking at a blistering pace, and much of the humour comes from their complete belief in what they are saying – wonky though it is.

The box may be a toy — or a time machine. At any rate, it turns out there may have been someone in the closet with Paterson. It might have been Dockerty's wife. Or maybe there wasn't anyone there at all. The two seem to suffer from attention deficit disorder because they don't seem to be able to start a comprehensive thought and hold it. They begin lists and never finish them. If a sentence is too long they just abandon it in the middle and move on. There is enough cracked logic to make it all hang together and through the barrage of words you do get to know them a bit. The two seem cosmically attached but worlds apart. Their friendship unravels and then ravels right back up. Maybe they are stuck in a time warp and condemned to repeat the same scene over and over again.

I suppose the question to ask at the end is, "What was that all about?" Who knows? Perhaps it is all summed up in the last line of this confounding, delightful show, "God dammit! Where did you get that box?"

Why does that sound so familiar?

<http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/08/17/review-fringe-2015-inescapable-45>



Inescapable: A Guilt Edged Winner

Reviewed by Jamie Portman, June 22, 2015

This is a consistently funny and dazzlingly creative piece about two middle-aged guys and a mysterious box that contains a sinister toy — but is it really a toy? Maybe it's a time machine. In any event the object tests their friendship in unexpected ways, frightens the bejeebers out of them and seems to have trapped them in a time warp. Dockery, all flailing arms and legs, is terrific as the guy who's plunged into gibbering neurosis by this item — plucked, we are repeatedly told, from his own closet. Jon Paterson is the buddy who has increasing difficulty maintaining his equilibrium in the face of all this angst. Together these actors manage the crisp, ping-pong dialogue with comic agility — and bolster it with memorable body language.

This an entertainment rooted in the absurdist tradition. There's Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco and N.F. Simpson, plus smidgeons of Peter Cook and Harold Pinter from the days when they wrote review sketches. As well, there should be a doff of the hat to Bill Murray and Groundhog Day. A winner all the way.

<http://capitalcriticscircle.com/?s=martin+dockery&x=0&y=0>

by Carl F Gauze



Inescapable

Produced by RibbitRePublic

By Martin Dockery, with Martin Dockery and Jon Patterson

May 19, 2016, Orlando, FL

Fringe favorites are back with a zippy, nonlinear story that you may never figure out, but you will thoroughly enjoy. Dockery and Patterson sit at a table. They contemplate a mysterious box only they can see. They argue about the switch, why Patterson brought it out of the closet, and why they have a headache inducing sense of déjà vu. But there's sub text; it piles up on the table and drips to the floor and gets on their shoes. Jealously and adultery and more jealousy and "I've got more money than you do" drive the questions and answers until only one choice remains: flip the switch. Like it really matters, a switch on a box can't control your future, right? Circular reasoning, circular dialog, this is an odd little show that fits in with this year's Sci-Fi heavy Festival. While this show is not easy to decode, it leaves a nice, warm and fuzzy payoff when you do figure it out. Which may be well after you leave.

<http://blogs.ink19.com/archikulture/2016/05/20/inescapable/>

On Stage: Ottawa's Theatre Arts Magazine

REVIEW: Inescapable (Allen's Review)

June 23, 2015 by [Allan Mackey](#)

4

This is a truly remarkable piece of theatre that relishes in its exquisitely circular nature. All points come back to one. Repeatedly. Questioning on a higher level whether we can escape the lives we create for ourselves, Inescapable is a tightly wound narrative that is like a pot of water that you can watch boil. It gets off to a slow start but starts to pick up speed to a crazed, fevered, emotional pace, before the perhaps inevitable and certainly tragic ending.

There is so much more I could say about how intricate and brilliant this story is (and some have indeed gone into more detail than I did) but I truly think this is a show best experienced not knowing too much about it and not having any preconceived notions.

Written by Martin Dockery (of such sold out hits: Wanderlust, The Bike Trip, Moonlight After Midnight, and Bursting Into Flames), Inescapable is performed by Dockery and another popular Fringe Veteran, Jon Paterson. These two are pros. They do phenomenal work here maintaining a lightning quick pace as well as impressively carrying the characters' arcs through a lot of rapid changes. It's so easy to see Dockery and Paterson getting as caught up and lost in Inescapable's momentum as the characters they play, and the audience.



Inescapable is one of the most polished shows you'll find at Ottawa Fringe – and it's just barely at the beginning of its life. This show will start selling out over the weekend. Get yer tickets in advance.

<http://www.onstageottawa.com/inescapablereview2/>

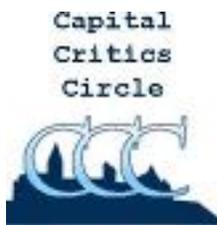
REVUE

[Reviews, The Revue](#) — June 21, 2015 by [John Sekerka](#)

INESCAPABLE – Martin Dockery

Flexing his writing chops, Dockery presents a delicious two dude play, who square off in the middle of a party over a mystery box, which may be a time machine, or perhaps just a box. Whatever the case, the friends get to replay their encounter as if rewound every five minutes, and with each subsequent segment more and more is revealed. The unfolding story threatens to turn explosive as the two leads square off in a cat and mouse game of lies revealed. Press replay, you won't be sorry.

<http://therevue.ca/2015/06/21/fringe-festival-reviews-part-1/>



Inescapable

Reviewed by Iris Winston - June 21, 2015, Ottawa

This clever, absurdist style drama maintains its momentum despite the circular arguments that are its focus.

The confrontation between two friends — soon to become erstwhile friends because of the deep-seated envy that unites and divides them — frequently revolves around a box (unseen) that may or may not be a toy or a time-travel device and may or may not work.

Repetition, a risky tool in drama, requires fine acting and careful timing to be effective. Both are here in spades as Martin Dockery and Jon Paterson dance in and out of the reality of the ties that bind and separate them.

Simply superb.

<http://capitalcriticscircle.com/?s=martin+dockery&x=0&y=0>

Winnipeg Free Press



Presented by: RibbitRepublic

Venue 13 - The Purple Room | Play-Drama

Posted: 07/13/2015



Starring fast-talking Fringe vets Jon Paterson and Martin Dockery from New York, this play is set in the other room of the holiday party you try to escape every year. You know the one.

When Paterson accidentally removes a mystery contraption from a closet at his friend's party, Dockery blows up. The pair verbally spar and go full tilt for 50 minutes. The pace leaves the audience with little room to breathe, let alone the actors.

Still, Paterson and Dockery are obvious pros, with great chemistry to boot. Without microphones, they manage to project to the large room and thoroughly entertain despite the script's repetitive nature.

— Jessica Botelho-Urbanski

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/special/fringe/reviews/inescapable-311592211.html?subsetletter=&genre=&subsetRstar=6&subsetPstar=&venue=>

On Stage: Ottawa's Theatre Arts Magazine

REVIEW: Inescapable (Valerie's Review)

June 24, 2015 [Valerie Cardinal](#)

4

The less you know about Inescapable before going in, the better. So I'm going to keep the plot details to a minimum. All I'll say is that this is about two men who keep repeating the same conversation endlessly. That doesn't make it sound like the most exciting thing in the world, but a smart, well-written script makes Inescapable a thrilling endeavor. Even though the conversation is literally repetitive, it's never boring. It's like a spiral, spinning and spinning downwards into never-ending madness. And since I love plays that lean towards the absurd, this was right up my alley.

Inescapable is very professionally done from both a performance and direction standpoint. Both Martin Dockery and Jon Paterson turn in fantastic performances. Dockery brings his signature larger-than-life gestures and manic energy, while Paterson balances out the crazy with a much more even-keeled performance that still goes through multiple emotional shifts. Their dialogue is rapid-fire and Vanessa Quesnelle's direction keeps Inescapable from being static.



Inescapable is a breath of fresh air; hilarious, surprising and efficient storytelling done by performers who know exactly what they're doing.

<http://www.onstageottawa.com/?s=martin+dockery>



INESCAPABLE

Written by [Apartment613](#) on Monday June 15th, 2015 - Review by [Mer Weinhold](#) - 45 minutes | Comedy, Drama | PG

The nature of *INESCAPABLE* makes it difficult to review without spoiling the experience of the show, since much of the enjoyment comes from slowly figuring out what's going on. Taking a break from a holiday party, the two nameless protagonists are trying to figure out the origins and function of a mysterious device as emotions heighten and secrets are revealed.

Like onions, parfaits, and ogres, *INESCAPABLE* is composed of layers, with each subsequent one getting closer and closer to the core of the matter. Much of the humour comes from repetition and callback. Paying attention to details is rewarded since a great deal of foreshadowing emerges as the play progresses. (Paying too much attention to detail, as I did, means that one starts laughing an awkwardly long time before they get to a punchline.)

Tightly written and carefully paced, the script contains many very similar stretches of dialogue, making it a challenging show to memorize and perform, and the actors deliver a nearly impeccable performance. With a heavy emphasis on dialogue, the play could have conceivably been a quiet and low-energy conversation, but instead the actors bring physicality to the characters with skillful use of body language and near-constant movement around the small stage.

Theatre enthusiasts can appreciate the challenge involved in writing, learning, and performing this script, and the rest of us can enjoy a play whose plot spirals instead of arcing, edging closer to the truth each time around while somehow withholding any real closure.

<http://apt613.ca/inescapable/>



“Inescapable” features riveting performances

~ by New Ottawa Critics on June 20, 2015.

If you still need someone to tell you to check out Martin Dockery’s work, you probably haven’t been paying attention. Let me help you out here: just go. In *Inescapable*, Martin Dockery and Jon Paterson star in a two-hander about a moment that never ends. Sadly, it does end for the audience, though it seems pretty clear the characters will be there for a while yet (the moment will be repeated eight more times this week; don’t miss it!).

The “plot” of this play is simple, and set up with alarming foreshadowing from the pre-show music: a few repeating bars of a popular Christmas carol set the stage perfectly for a high-stakes conversational tug-o-war between two old friends at, but slightly apart from, an annual holiday party.

Both Dockery and Paterson give riveting performances in their (re)enactments of the climactic moment of their friendship. At first I asked myself simply “how long can they talk around this issue?” and “why did he go into the closet?”, but these questions give way to more profound wonderings about the nature of and motivations behind human relationships, and their breaking points.

The script is sinuous and natural in its cyclical pattern, flowing in waves of tension that rise and fall with each variant of the power struggle played out before us. The actors rise to the challenge of performing constantly similar scenes in a unique manner, making each into a fresh contest of wills, as the profound discomfort of their characters rises, and the audience gains a larger glimpse of the inescapable elephant in the room (or the closet).

I could talk about what I think the script is doing (who can tell for sure?), and the nature of the reality it depicts, but I’d rather talk with you about it at the Fringe bar once you see it for yourself.

Wes Babcock

<http://newottawacritics.com/2015/06/20/inescapable-features-riveting-performances/>



Inescapable

Reviewed by **Kat Fournier**

20 June, 2015

written and interpreted by Martin Dockery / Ribbit RePublic

Two friends have stepped away from a yearly Holiday party for just a moment – or have they? After discovering a small box, with only a switch and a warning label, the plot doesn't just thicken; it warps, and doubles back on itself so that the audience cannot be certain that the progression of time on stage is linear.

This play reveals its central theme early on. It's about memory and of our tenuous grasp of reality. And though this has been introduced to us early on, Dockery still hooks his audience and takes them on a journey that they did not see coming. Dockery is adept at using the illusory reality of the stage to toy with his audience, and *Inescapable* does just that. In *Inescapable*, repetition is used as a tool that unveils an alternate reality between these two characters, one that they can't fully grasp.

There are also so many things right about this show. Jon Paterson and Martin Dockery have an electric rapport on stage. The dialogue is dizzying, the characters are funny, and the plot is the thing of a hallucinogenic vision.

<http://capitalcriticscircle.com/ottawa-fringe-2015-inescapable/>

Inescapable

BY : ANNA M. JOHNSON, MAY 18, 2016

Inescapable opens with two adult friends having an argument about a box that one of them found in the other's closet. The two then repeat the argument, and repeat it again and again.

The entire show is about the two characters (played by Martin Dockery and Joe Paterson) continually having this argument and being "reset" via unconscious time travel without taking a break between each "reset." More small details about the friends are revealed each time – details that expose the lies that both men have been keeping from each other.

While the actual memories of having the argument are reversed, the anger is not, allowing both of the actors to explore many different motivations for why we humans like to pick fights. Both men are utterly dedicated to their parts; they both spoke almost non-stop for the entirety of the 45-minute show. The setting of a boring holiday party which the two have ducked away from imparts an air of claustrophobia into to the small Red Venue, which then successfully serves its function to create palpable tension.

The show, written by Dockery, moves at a fast pace with writing reminiscent of the work of playwright Neil LaBute. A possible issue is that some lines went so quickly that they were hard to understand immediately, and by the time that they've been figured out, five more lines have been delivered. This actually did improve as the show went on, with the dialogue feeling more deliberate near the end.

It is difficult to adequately describe just how fluidly the story moved and how adept the actors were with their transitions between "resets." The continual flow of conversation was captivating and worth seeing multiple times. Inescapable is the definition of unique small-scale work that the Fringe is so good at hosting.

<http://www.watermarkonline.com/2016/05/18/orlando-fringe-2016-review-inescapable/>

On Stage: Ottawa's Theatre Arts Magazine

June 19, 2015 by [Robyn Lester](#)

4

Martin Dockery's *Inescapable* throws us right into the action, opening with a middle-aged man grilling his friend about a box on a table. Why did you bring it out? What were you thinking? Where did you find it? What were you doing in my closet?

The man becomes increasingly unnerved by the presence of the box, terrified that it might be working. But when he starts to explain this fear to his friend – when he realizes it feels like they've had this conversation before – the loop starts over. Why did you bring it out? What were you thinking? Where did you find it? What were you doing in my closet?

As it turns out, they're trapped in a continuous time loop brought on by a homemade time machine.

Although the premise of this play hinges on repetition, it kept me intrigued the entire time. With each "loop," another tidbit of information is revealed, eventually uncovering a backstory of lies and deception and creating conflict between the characters, which seeps into the next loop despite their inability to remember what they were fighting about. Martin Dockery and Jon Paterson were incredibly convincing in their roles and both exuded an energy that made the hour fly by.



If you're a fan of offbeat, mind-bending work, be sure to check this one out.

<http://www.onstageottawa.com/?s=martin+dockery>

Martin Dockery Double Header Proves to be Extremely Satisfying

Posted on [June 20, 2015](#) by [Brie McFarlane](#)

You would be hard pressed to find an artist currently touring the North American Fringe circuit that gets as much hype as Martin Dockery at the [Ottawa Fringe Festival](#). A most magnetic performer and storyteller, Dockery has been packing venues here for years. Back again this year with two brand new shows, *Inescapable* and *Bursting into Flames*, Dockery proves himself to be a creative tour-de-force.

Inescapable, written by and starring Dockery alongside Jon Paterson (*House, Be a Man*) with direction by Vanessa Quesnelle (*Moonlight After Midnight*), is a fantastic little two-hander that constantly explores and deconstructs a moment in time and space (or what we might call a *chronotope*). It is difficult to write a comprehensive or linear synopsis for a piece with such a cyclical nature where you are never quite sure which plane of reality you and the actors are existing in at any given instance. This, however, is exactly where this show draws its strength: it forces the spectator to continually question what is real and what isn't; what is true and what is false; and [what the f@*k is in that box](#)?! Or is there even a box at all...?

The two performers start out on opposite sides of a small table centre stage, debating whether or not this mysterious, invisible (to us) box works. As questions arise about the object and its origin, so does our curiosity about the conflicting narratives that come out of each man's respective answers. You have to admire the acting chops of both Dockery and Paterson who power through this text at an ungodly pace. Furthermore, the script itself is chockfull of repeated phrases ("Why did you bring this thing in here?", "What were you doing in the closet?", "Does it work?" etc) that can be notorious for tripping up actors, yet here the phrases mark some sort of time in the endless permutations of this single moment. The repetitions are useful not only for audience comprehension, but they also allow for the performers to continually heighten and release tensions between the characters, giving them an emotional journey even though, arguably, there is no real spatial or temporal progression.

A definite throw-back to Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, Absurdism's big kahunas, *Inescapable* does not have a straightforward conclusion or even a conclusive ending. You are never given any more information as to these character's backstories other than what they say about one another and it probably doesn't matter. What's important is that we are shown over and over again the various ways of revealing the major axioms of the show namely that a) Dockery's character keeps his friend around purely as a marker of his own social standing and b) Theresa, the wife of Dockery's character, is having an affair. There is never any denouement once these things are revealed as somewhere along the way the cycle starts over and we begin again.

Moreover, there are some intriguing concepts that are brought up in this show. In particular, there are the moments where Paterson tells his friend that he sounds crazy, to which Dockery responds that that is exactly how he knows that he is not crazy and Paterson then argues that, in fact, crazy people can know when they're crazy. Who are we to believe? "Insanity is relative" author Ray Bradbury suggests, "It depends on who has who locked in what cage", an idea that this show explores through juxtaposing (though never crossing over) the external universe of the 'holiday party' with the internal one of the room just outside the party.

A highly commendable production and one I certainly advise seeing, although you probably didn't need me to tell you that. I would be remiss if I did not briefly mention the direction of Quesnelle as I imagine that she had her work cut out trying to match the rise and falls of tensions and rhythms with the circular text, which (as previously stated) is done beautifully. Paterson holds his own on stage against the oftentimes frenetic Dockery and the two play off one another with confidence and intensity. Definitely check this show out especially if you are more familiar with Dockery's solo work as it offers up a completely different facet of Dockery's performative talents.

I'm not sure what else I can really say in order to convince you that Martin Dockery is both a performer *and* a playwright who should not be missed at the Ottawa Fringe Festival. Both shows, *Inescapable* and *Bursting into Flames*, are stellar and feature thought-provoking material that does not allow for passive spectatorship. Book your tickets now or you might regret it if you don't.

<http://www.herdmag.ca/fringe-2015-martin-dockery-double-header/>