

**REVIEW: Australian Stage – 13 October 2010**

**Jack Charles v the Crown**

Reviewed by Dione Joseph

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<http://www.australianstage.com.au>

Jack Charles v the Crown is a one-man show...but what a wealth of stories he has to offer!

In an hour and a quarter Uncle Jack takes us on a journey to a time and place that we here in Melbourne can intimately relate to. With visual images, music and songs he is a true artist who brings to light some very personal and political stories. *Bastardy*, directed by Amiel Courtin-Wilson was a result of nearly seven years of filming and unequivocally portrayed the downward spirals that engulfed one man - but it also was more than just a glimpse of a 'cat burglar, homosexual, drug addict' it was a voice that championed for change in Australia's bureaucracy.



*Photo - Bindi Cole*

This year's performance, co-written by Uncle Jack himself and John Romeril and under the artistic direction of Ilbijerri's Rachel Maza is Uncle Jack's last chance (at the budding age of 67) to speak to both white and black legislations - particularly those that inhibit change within the system. The performance is a largely autobiographical chronicle and accompanied with anecdotes, memories and some wonderful music, Uncle Jack charms his audience as he takes them on a somewhat shortened version of his eventful life.

Credit must be given to the musicians on stage not only for their brilliant technique but also the immense support and respect they openly had for Uncle Jack. Under the musical direction of Nigel MacLean (who also played guitar and violin), Phil Collins (Percussion) and Mal Beveridge (Bass), some very special stories were brought to life.

Definitely one of the highlights of the show was hearing Uncle Jack sing. Sporting a delightful bluesy voice his songs rumbled loud and clear as he won the hearts of all his listeners. Beneath the dim blue light, the waning afro hair and the jamming musos, it was a scene from Beale Street but even better because it was happening right here in Melbourne.

There is something special about Uncle Jack. Something about his voice, his stature, his laugh, his story - something powerful but humbling. It was that something that richoted people to their feet to give the man a standing ovation. It is most certainly, something that you won't want to miss.

2010 Melbourne International Arts Festival and Ilbijerri Theatre Company present

**JACK CHARLES V THE CROWN**

Venue: the Arts Centre, Fairfax Studio

Dates: Tue 12 – Sat 16 Oct at 7.45pm

Matinees: Sat 16 & Sun 17 Oct at 2pm

Duration: 1hr 10min no interval

Tickets: \$40 - \$25

Bookings: the Arts Centre 1300 182 183 | [www.theartscentre.com.au](http://www.theartscentre.com.au) | Ticketmaster 1300 723 038 |

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