

Ferociously filthy

AT 60, Paul McCarthy might be an elder statesman of contemporary American art but his work, as ever, takes the mantle of respectability and defecates on it.

In his biggest European show to date, we are treated to a mini-retrospective dating from the Seventies onwards, and a vast body of recent work themed around the pirate — inspired initially by the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disneyworld.

Subverting cultural stereotypes is standard McCarthy strategy, cowboys and Santa Claus being two other victims of his videoed absurdly theatrical performances that rapidly descend into orgies of simulated violence and profanity.

One memorable image is of Santa Claus shitting into the mouths of his elf helpers (it is actually chocolate sauce, employed by McCarthy along with ketchup and HP sauce to mimic bodily fluids).

In the Whitechapel's ground floor

EXHIBITION

Paul McCarthy LaLa Land
Whitechapel Gallery

Nick Hackworth

gallery hang crude expressionistic drawings and sculptures about pirates as the personification of aggression in wars, and colonialism, thereby poking two fingers up at US foreign policy. The head-and-shoulder busts of pirate figures here are comically modelled and sport penises sprouting from eye sockets and noses, so extending the metaphor to the level of normal life, exposing the violence inherent in everyday social interactions.

Meanwhile, in a huge warehouse just off Brick Lane is the highlight of the show — three huge ships of sorts. One is a vast, strange abstracted machine; another explores the freedom afforded by the sea to the super-rich on their



Photograph, Pirate Party, 2005

super-yachts, but the best is a huge frigate, used by McCarthy for a related performance. Its floor is sticky with the residue of ketchup and HP sauce, evocative, provocative, nutritious and tasty.

● Until 8 January (020 7522 7880).

Peyroux makes it personal

POP

Madeleine Peyroux
Barbican

John Aizlewood

WHEN 32-year-old Madeleine Peyroux's second album, *Careless Love*, eased its way into the Top 10 earlier this year, it seemed as though a new jazz-tinged crossover star was among us. The reality was more complex.

In 1996, the American's debut, *Dreamland*, created something of a stir. Then, according to popular folklore, the bilingual Peyroux disappeared for nine years, crushed by the wheels of the star-making machine. She argued that she had simply returned to her former continent-hopping life of busking in Paris and low-key bar shows in New York.

As *Careless Love* took off, her world unravelled once more. A former boyfriend sued her for \$1 million, claiming to have funded her rediscovery; an appearance on the crucial stepping stone that is *Parkinson* was cancelled (they say she flounced; she says they cancelled without explanation) and she allegedly went incommunicado again. Her British label announced that it had hired a private detective to find her, but she claims to have been in New York with her manager all along and that her disappearance was "a hoax" perpetuated by her label.

Little wonder, then, that there was a genuine sense of anticipation at the Barbican last night. In the event, save for the occasional surreal introduction ("We have come from far away. But we have been further away than this"), there was nothing for the ambulance-chasers to salivate over.

Glasses were knocked over in the circle, a rude, slobbish woman in the front row

plonked her feet on the stage for almost the entire show and, for one awkward moment during *Don't Wait Too Long*, the audience attempted to clap along, but nothing fazed Peyroux or violated the reverent hush.

If anything, it was all too slick. As if they were a collective rather than a dictatorship, the five band members were allowed far too many stultifying solos during a show that never quite knew whether it was jazz or something with more eclectic reference points.

Peyroux herself often displayed the phrasing of Billie Holiday, but there were echoes of blues legend Ma Rainey and a thrilling approximation of Josephine Baker on *J'ai Deux Amours*, a song previously regarded as Baker's own. Better still, she delivered Bob Dylan's *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go* with a pained bile its author would relish.

An aching, heartbreak-laced version of the standard *Smile* aside, the highlight was *Weary Blues*, for which Peyroux, for the first and last time, stood at the microphone without a guitar to hide behind. Suddenly, she appeared genuinely vulnerable and the evening moved on to another level of intensity. The way ahead is clear: less edge in her personal life, but more in her music. Then everyone could breathe easier.

A Macbeth of many parts

THEATRE

Macbeth
Almeida

Fiona Mountford

WE HAVE already endured a three-man *Tempest* at the Globe this year, but that production now looks veritably profligate with the acting budget compared to this. For here, Stephen Dillane assumes all 30-odd parts of *Macbeth*. But what, exactly, does such an undertaking prove? That Dillane is capable of remembering, impeccably, a monstrous number of lines? Yes. Anything else? No.

The idea that Dillane and director Travis Preston have concocted is that all the other characters are fragments of *Macbeth*'s fevered imagination. This thesis might work well in an undergraduate essay but should not be put before a paying audience for an hour and 40 minutes, even with three onstage musicians to relieve the tension. For no matter how quickly Dillane

rattles through the text, and how few pauses he allows himself between scenes, this is a punishing evening.

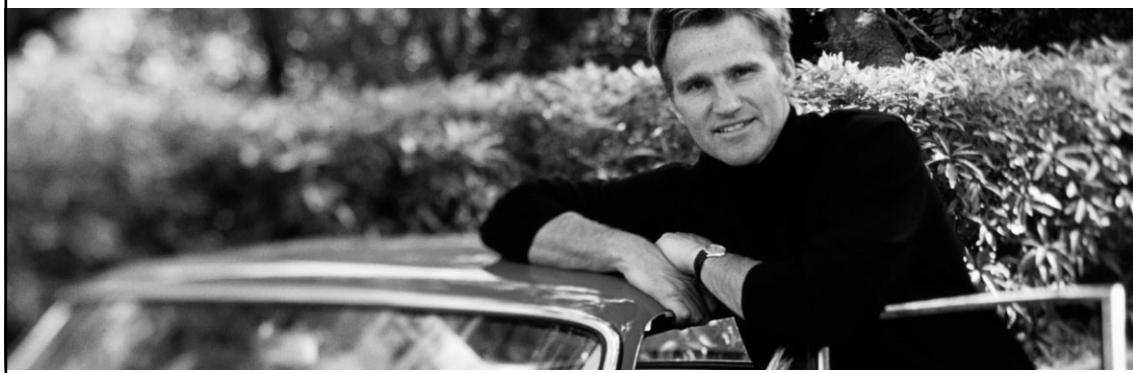
The besuited Dillane, thrashing around the bare, sand-covered stage, plays *Macbeth* himself with lucid intelligence and animation. Yet he doesn't

seem particularly interested in any of the other parts, blurring some lines, giving a tum-ti-tum rhythm and ing others in a silly voice saddles Malcolm with a stammering speech impediment and, bleu, recites the major Lady *Macbeth*'s words in French. Thus the initial tension, which should crackle between the *Macbeth* and the *Macbeth*, is like the *Macbeth* 'Allo 'Allo joining the *Macbeth*. There is no doubt that Dillane makes a *Macbeth*. A *Macbeth* requires no supporting

● Until 5 November
Information: 020 7359-

On his own
Stephen Dillane

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