

[Here is where we meet – Marlowe Studio, Canterbury](#)

Reviewer: Victoria Bawtree

The Public Reviews Rating: ★★★★★



On entering The Marlowe's intimate studio space, we meet four people talking to themselves as they pace out the dimensions of a room. As they move around their 'box', littered with various nostalgic objects, there is no interaction between them: they are unaware of each other's presence, but co-exist in the same space.

The four actors are Accidental Collective, which is a performance company based in Kent, and also The Marlowe Theatre's first Resident Associate Company. 'here is where we meet' is a co-production between Accidental Collective and The Marlowe Studio.

The quartet, led by Daisy Orton and Pablo Pakula, takes as its inspiration a semi-autobiographical book of the same name by John Berger, published in 2005. The programme states of Berger's book: 'Its stories follow the narrator John through a series of Europe locations where he encounters people long since departed'.

Accidental Collective takes on the character of John and the European locations – of Lisbon, Geneva, and London – but in between the snippets of this central theme, the company tells stories of its own; narrates facts about relevant landmarks and artwork, and gradually deconstructs its set so that boundaries between on-stage and off are blurred.

The story of John and his travels should provide continuity, but as there is so much additional material, it becomes a secondary consideration. Indeed, Accidental Collective states that John's narrative was a vehicle for its own story-telling. The audience consequently is pulled from past to present, and actors change from in character to portraying themselves.

Daisy Orton is the first to cross this line with the story of her Auntie Gertie, although it wasn't entirely clear until the end of her monologue that a boundary had been crossed. Pablo Pakula, on the other hand, was very at ease with his family anecdotes, with less hesitation in his colloquial style.

The feeling of reminiscence over past lives is strong throughout the production, and the use of one central doorframe in the set becomes symbolic of travel, both between different places and different eras. Music is especially well used, and the co-ordination of on-stage radios and tape reels in particular makes for a clever sound design by David Roesner. The use of the projector and 'tour guide'-style narrations read from cards, however, was more jarring.

While this will not fulfill those who enjoy continuity of a storyline and developed characterisation, Accidental Collective does succeed in encouraging contemplation and reminiscence.