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Wobble's take on folk involved songs about blacksmiths set to mighty basslines, clattering percussion, drone-rocking electric guitar, a piper playing a strange array of medieval-looking instruments and two female vocalists who struggled to make themselves heard over the instruments. This was English roots music given a roots reggae and experimental rock makeover, with a dash of free jazz added for good measure when a trumpeter and flautist joined in for a couple of long jams. It might have been a hopeless mess but Wobble's bass-playing held the music together, and helped give it hypnotic power and clarity.★★★★★
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RFK

The Culture Project
New York
ERIC UHLFELDER

For most people under 50, Robert Kennedy is no more than a footnote in American political history: US attorney-general, one-term senator, presidential candidate. But despite his abbreviated life, Kennedy evolved into one of this country's unique political voices. And in this one-man off-Broadway show at the Culture Project, playwright and actor Jack Holmes reminds us how his words still resonate:

"For too long we've acted as if the great military

strength of this country could bring about an American solution to every problem across the world. We know now that it cannot."

Holmes's physical resemblance to Kennedy is startling. The actor is clearly empathic toward Kennedy and his struggles between his ideals and

reality. But the play is more than an historical ode. It makes no attempt to deify Kennedy, revealing an abrasive, arrogant character that early on was on the wrong side of key issues. Instead, Holmes structures *RFK* as tragedy, about a life pulled by circumstances that ultimately lured Kennedy to his demise.

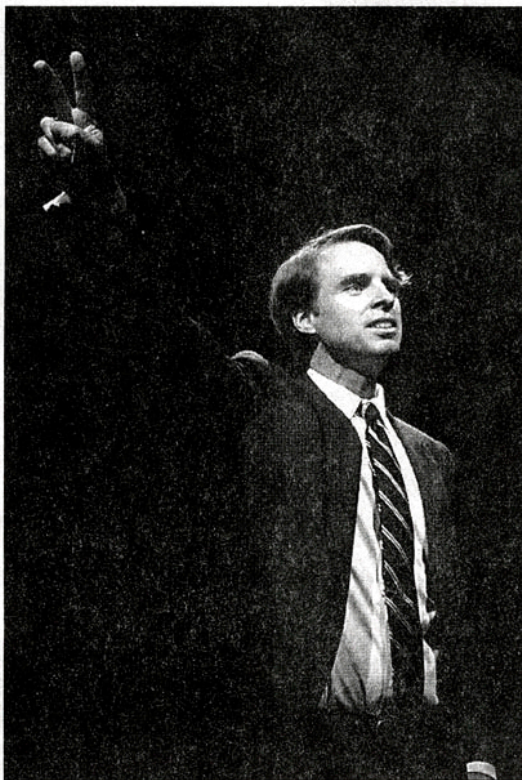
With the skilful direction of Larry Moss, Holmes delivers a near-flawless performance, deftly weaving together dozens of vignettes that define Kennedy and his times. The play circuitously winds us through some of the most tumultuous years in US history. It succeeds by relying on a variety of dialogue – one-sided conversations, anecdotes, discourses, and speeches – striking non-sequitrial storytelling that catches the audience off-guard, and well-choreographed movement across a simple set to convey Kennedy's character and the forces set against him.

In spite of its dark, philosophical focus, the play is balanced with simple, unexpected humour: his brother's sudden desire to speak to Cary Grant (because he's the president); explaining to his precocious daughter that he's being interviewed because he's important, in spite of her repeated claims to the contrary.

Single-handedly resurrecting a forgotten historical figure is a daunting task. But all this works because Holmes makes us feel that he's at home in the many places he brings us in telling of Kennedy's metamorphosis from disliked, hard-edged lawyer to a generation's political conscience. And making the story even more tragic: the knowledge that it's true.

★★★★★

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Robert Kennedy: now merely a footnote in US political history?