



[Wizard](#) by Dominic Berry  
R&D 'scratch' performance at [Contact](#)  
Reviewed by [Simon Belt](#) May 2011

I came across **Dominic Berry** (Freed Up Poets) at one of Manchester's ubiquitous open mic events reading some of his poetry and thought he was interesting, but it was as a Master of Ceremony compere for a poetry night at **greenroom** that he really stood out as someone to watch. I wondered how I could include Dominic if the Manchester Salon ever organised anything there, as his timing and response to audience mood displayed a fabulous sense of interactive timing. With the Arts Council budget cuts forcing the unexpected closure of the **gree**

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m, it was onwards to the

[Contact](#)  
[theatre space](#)

to get to see him perform outside of the rather hackneyed poetry reading nights.

Completely authored by Manchester Literature Festival slam winner Dominic Berry, **Wizard** is about someone who hasn't been outside his flat for months and a friendly neighbour called

**Man**  
who visits to rapport with him.

**Wizard**

can see amazing magic in places most people can't - a dragon ninja drag-queen scaling his shower, a menopausal midwife haunting his kettle. Based around poetic interchanges between Man and Wizard, and blends this with Hip Hop, comedy, and theatre.

This second R&D 'scratch' performance of the script and production follows an earlier **sharing** and

**workshop**

performance. I know it's Dominic's debut script but the involvement of an audience in an unfinished production with

**Feedback Forms**

, and a Questions and Answers section, to solicit ideas on

**what changes should be made**

to format and balance was a little odd. Maybe it's me and I need to get out more like Wizard, but surely this is a luxurious and inverted approach to audience engagement who surely come along to see something beyond their own experience rather than be asked what the cast should

be doing? The Q&A session seemed heavily laden with a therapeutic overtone of the cast and writer wanting to be loved or guided to a better way with requests for the audience to advise them on whether to use puppets rather than physical objects.

Putting that to one side for now, I thought the production was on the whole lean and mean which gave real focus to the tightly worked script and an outstanding performance by Rod Tame as Wizard. Although I say the script was tightly worked, it was inherently confused, contradictory and somewhat unbalanced in terms of character roles. The story has two characters essentially - firstly a guy called **Wizard** (played by Rod Tame) who imagines he's a wizard and stays in his flat to engage in conversation with his kettle (Ursula), toaster (Catherine) and dish rack (Daisuke) all spoken by Jo Warburton, and secondly an ordinary guy called

**Man**

(played by Dominic Berry) who has a job and work colleagues he thinks of as dull but aspires to be poetic and rhyming like

**Wizard**

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[Valuing the Arts](#)