

# Shattered

[Home \(/\)](#) / [Edinburgh Fringe \(edfringe\)](#) / [Shattered](#)



By Jodie McVicar (author/Jodie+McVicar) |  5th Aug 2019 | ★★★★★



This one woman show featuring Diana Varco sees her shape shift effortlessly into 35 different characters, as she narrates the journey of her self discovery through trauma. Varco expertly showcases the fragmented elements of her mind, each anthropomorphised into its own character, each playing its part in protecting her from the brutal realities she's experienced. '*Denial*' tells us how she's happy alone forever; '*Panic*' recounts an attempted abduction from a park; and '*Shame*' reinforces that she's '*an ugly weirdo freak born with no libido*'.

## A raw, visceral dissection of the human psyche

It's clever, brilliant, disturbing, funny and heart breaking all in equal measure in a way I'd never thought possible. As Varco works her fears back to their origins, '*Shattered*' becomes a raw, visceral dissection of the human psyche; a rollercoaster expose of each

element of our subconscious as they struggle and battle to quell and protect our conscious selves. There's a deep darkness in *Shattered*; and a sense that once we've seen these elements broken down in such a relatable way, that we will never unsee them. 'Fear', 'Guilt' and "Numb' are made so very real; Varco's coping strategies so intrinsically common and familiar to us all, that it will undoubtedly have you peering inward - as any excellent performance does.

Diana Varco delivers a compelling, intimate and raw portrayal of the horror behind the all-American dream of cheerleaders and yoga bunnies. Varco's material is outstanding, combined with physical movement echoing the tone of the characters. The gnarled features of 'Shame' made real with facial features and movements inhabiting the character, ominously convincing her how she 'cast a spell to compel the penis' - the symbolism and comparison to witchcraft not going unnoticed. The sensual purr of 'Confidence', a silky Spanish dancer who convinces her to wear the dress she is raped in. And the practical, pragmatic 'Alison' who guides her through the healing process.

Varco inhabits the stage expertly and effortlessly, utilising flashing coloured stage lights to further amplify her moods. The neon blue terror of 'Depression', the ruby red engulfing of 'Suicidal Thoughts', and the stark light of day that brings us back to the present, as Varco resolves that she will live again, and will tell her story. 'Shattered' is so successful in its genre because it avoids voyeurism around rape and sexual assault, whilst capturing how insidiously it breaks the essence of a person. The regular upbeat interludes and interspersed humour serve to elevate the performance from something which could feel quite dismal. And by the end, Varco's story is not over - however we are hopeful. And every one of us is with her on that journey.

---

By Jodie McVicar (reviewer/Jodie McVicar)  @jodiemcvicar  
(<https://twitter.com/jodiemcvicar>)