



## A Round-Heeled Woman

Venue: [Riverside Studios](#)

Where: Outer London

Date Reviewed: 21 October 2011

WOS Rating: ★★

Average Reader Rating: ★★★★★

Reader Reviews: [View and add to our user reviews](#)

With [Jerusalem](#) receiving six Tony Award nominations, it seems only fair the Americans have a crack of the whip this side of the Atlantic. Having premiered in Miami, *A Round-Heeled Woman*, adapted from Jane Juska's book by [Jane Prowse](#) (who also directs), now finds itself in Hammersmith.

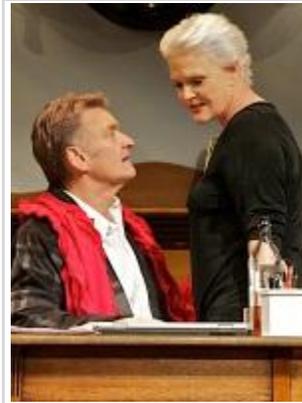
The story centres around 66 year-old Juska ([Sharon Gless](#)), a woman whose sex life has been so parched of late she decides to take out a rather risqué advertisement in the *New York Book Review*. "I want to have as much sex as possible before my 67th birthday, with a nice man who preferably likes Trollope" about sums it up.

It should come as no surprise that she encounters her fair share of weirdos (which she oddly finds baffling). In reality though, what she is really parched of is her estranged son Andy (Michael Thomson). Freud say what you will.

The first problem with Prowse's production is the stage. Designed like a TV set it is far too big for the two and three hander vignettes the play is comprised of. The result is a lack of connectivity and spark between the actors. Also, its desire to be 'real' - a wine rack with just the right amount of missing bottles and the sumptuous king sized bed - comes up desperately short when Andy has the impossible task of swinging an axe in an imagined forest, when he's clearly thwacking at a white picket fence.

The play itself is reminiscent of American TV comedies, replete with a live studio audience, who watch a series of one dimensional characters popping in, getting a few laughs and popping out again without creating any real impact. The use of multi role too is confusing because many of the characters are too similar.

Perhaps the most baffling character is that of Miss Mackenzie, who pops in from a different century, and out of a Trollope novel, to chew the cud and exchange views on marriage and love with Jane. Sadly this comic atmosphere renders the more tender moments of the play unbelievable, particularly Jane's flashbacks about her son, which encourage some sort of



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emotional response which the play itself cannot sustain.

*A Round-Heeled Woman* is redeemed in parts by Gless, who works the audience well, and there are some outstanding one liners, the highlight being Sydney' s charming request to Jane, " Put your tits on the table."

- Ed Strickland

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### Reader Reviews

Score	Comment	Date
★★★ ★★★	A WONDERFUL NEW PLAY, THIS REVIEWER MUST HAVE BEEN IN ANOTHER BUILDING OR NOT UNDERSTOOD THE PLAY AT ALL. GO SEE YOU WONT BE DISAPOINTED! GLESS IS BRILLIANT! - <i>ak</i>	24 Oct 11
★★★ ★★★	Absolutely fabulous! Enjoyed every minute and loved watching the story unfold. I enjoyed the mix of current and past, thought the stage worked well felt like I was right in there with them. A simple stage made the acting all the more prevelent - especially the fantastic acting by Sharon Gless who was believeable, stunning and mesmerising to watch, I got completely caught up in the mix of emotions. Brilliant writing, excellent one liners that made me laugh out loud. A highly enjoyable evening all round! - <i>Holly Rance</i>	23 Oct 11
★★★ ★★★	I totally disagree with this review. Have we seen the same play? I loved the stage set and thought it worked very well. Sharon Gless is magnificent. The evening was full of humour and deeply touching moments. I thought it worked on every level and it is one of the best evenings I have had at the theatre for a long time. - <i>Susan Jenssen</i>	22 Oct 11
★★★ ★★★	Thought the play was better than this reviewer suggests but, as with any play which has to condense an entire book into two hours, a lot of the detail of why/how the relationship between son and mother is so bad is skipped over so the eventual emotional reunion is too schmaltzy and ill explained to ring true. Gless is superb as Jane and there are some brilliantly funny moments but don't expect pathos to match as - and here I agree with the assessment aboutn Miss Mackenze being too weird to really add anything - the on/off whizzing of actors at high speed with costume changes to match takes away from the slow burn build up of emotion that might have been intended. Do go see this play, it is definitely different and great to see something like this at the Riverside Studios - <i>Harriet Freeborn</i>	22 Oct 11



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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Funny, relevant, moving and poignant, Round Heeled Woman is refreshing and progressive and your reviewer just doesn't get it. Hardly surprisingly, if the one liner he quotes is his favourite - get a life Ed! Sharon Gless takes Jane Juska's book and runs with it, and the result is a joy to behold. Go Jane! - <i>CEC</i>	22 Oct 11
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Totally disagree with this review. I see a lot of theatre and the writing and acting was superb and mesmerising. Still to your musicals reviewer and leave us to enjoy a fun play with poignant moments, emotion and passion. - <i>Joanna Symes</i>	21 Oct 11
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Having seen the play myself, I totally disagree with this review. Thoroughly enjoyed the performance. Was a great night out. Lends itself better to a female audience though, as proven by the writer of this review, he obviously lacks the ability to grasp the comedy in the nuances of a womens psyche. - <i>JWG</i>	21 Oct 11

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