Edward Albee's The Goat or Who is Silvia? is not an easy play. At its centre lies the tricky premise of a prizewinning architect who falls inexplicably in love with a goat. It's a love story with a difference but also the contemporary tragedy of a man whose life becomes to fall systematically apart on hitting his 50th birthday.

Albee's play is an absurdist comedy with a bitter aftertaste, a drama of miscomprehension, intolerance and fear that scratches uneasily beneath a pristine skin of social acceptability and respectability in the cosmopolitan city par excellence. The 2002 New York premiere had Bill Pullman and Mercedes Ruhl as the successful couple whose glossy surface cracks as the marital sitcom mutates into a full-blown Greek tragedy. There was a hard, cold element of Clytemenestra in Ruhl's empassioned performance that contrasted effectively with Pullman's effortlessly suave Martin. Bill Irwin and Sally Fields, replacing Pullman and Ruhl on Broadway, presented a more suburban couple: more the nouveau riche that inherited wealth. The London premiere in 2004 brought the husband and wife team of Jonathan Pryce and Kate Fahy and while Pryce was able to provide a bemused vulnerability to the role, Fahy never quite rose to the demands of Stevie's emotional journey.

At the Romea theatre, José María Pou provides a veritable contrast to Pryce's lean angst-ridden architect. More superficially buoyant he also has something of the awkwardness of a figure who would rather the architecture spoke for him. The preparations for the interview with Ross leave him somewhat ill at ease and make him easy prey for the more predatory Ross. Ross alludes to their enduring friendship but what he is after is vengeance from the university contemporary who outstripped him and this is masked under the veneer of supposedly idealistic intentions. While Llopis's Ross seems a rather watery characterization with a somewhat abrupt transition from jocular to vengeful, Pou's Martin and Angelat's Stevie provide a strong opening with an effortless banter of stylish wordplay that points to a marriage of minds where light repartee and sparkling conversation keep both on their toes.

Joaquim Roy provides a spacious room of high ceilings and imposing doors. There is something of the Greek temple in the grand doorway and distant stairway through which the characters make their entries and exits. The subdued décor, framed family photograph, grouped paintings and tastefully arranged bookcases also suggest a certain Catalan chic. The dramatic paintings of twisted bridges, barren landscapes and blank faces provide a pointer of the damage that is to come. Their aesthetic is also suitably surreal with a touch of the absurdist. This is New York reflected through a discerning Catalan eye.

Pou's translation is sharp, witty and imaginative. His direction is precise and careful, his conception of Martin majestic: a giant who hunches, crouches and falls in on himself (as much literally as metaphorically) as the action progresses. As Angelat's Stevie begins to trash the impeccable apartment, Pou's Martin steps cautiously through the discarded books and ripped canvases trying slowly to find a place for items that have been destroyed beyond repair. This is in many ways a metaphor for their marriage and while Angelat's Stevie never quite manages the crescendo of devastating anger that marked Ruhl's brutal killing of the goat, she is able to confront Pou's Martin in ways that increasingly take on a more menacing dimension. Pau Roca's Billy is a suitably confused teenager whose collapse seems entirely plausible as the 'perfect' family falls around his feet. The audience is suitably perplexed by the directions in which Albee's text shifts and turns and the ending is paced towards a terrible crescendo that is followed by a suitably long silence.

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