



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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PLANTING THE DUNK BOTANIC GARDENS

BigTOE Productions

Holden Street Theatres

Until 7 Mar 2009

Review by Brian Godfrey

Dunk Island - famous for being one of Australia's tropical paradise tourists' resorts; little known for attempts to plant a botanic garden on its lush shores. But there have been two tries to date: one in the late 1800's/early 1900's by E. J. Banfield, the other in 1976 by Mark O'Connor.

O'Connor went on to become Australia's Olympic Poet and author of this one-man show giving an account of his ill-fated attempt.

Directed by Emil Wolk, with stunning imagery by Linda Martin, music by Todd Hardy and starring David Malikoff, this is an entertaining take on conservation and its greatest enemy - Man (or possibly, God?).

Malikoff portrays himself as the actor, O'Connor and various Dunk Island characters with great theatrical skill and flair, and a rich timbre to his voice reminiscent of such actors as Richard Burton. His facial manipulations leave no doubt as to who he is at any given time (there is an uncanny Maurie Fields resemblance to one of his characters that proves real Aussies still exist).

The show is surprisingly humorous, with some fitting symbolism such as Malikoff being only back-lit by flowery projections from time to time indicating becoming one with nature.

"Planting The Dunk Botanic Gardens" deserves to be more fruitfully watered with audience than the sprinkling it had on its second performance.

Stars: 4 stars (out of 5)