



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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GUTTENBERG THE MUSICAL

Neil Gooding Productions

Banquet Room

Until 13 Jun 2009

Review by Fran Edwards

So this is what it looks like when you pitch a new musical to a Broadway producer? Possibly not, but it makes for an hilarious production. Bud and Doug (alias David Somerville and Simon Van der Stap) have a dream – to write their own musical, but where can they find a subject that has not already been more than well covered? The inventor of the Printing Press, Johann Guttenberg – perfect.

Well, almost, if you allow for the fact that there is very little information available about this important man. Will this stop them, of course not! Stand by for historical fiction, complete with mad monks, blond maidens and various townsfolk. Let's not let details of how the wine press became the mechanism for printing books distract us from the emerging love story of how Johann's grape-stomping staff member, the aptly named, Helvetica, yearned after her boss, who seemed remarkably uninterested!

Bud and Doug play all the parts (with the aid of many baseball caps to distinguish the characters) and they sing too! The baseball caps move around a lot, sometimes they wear two (or three) and even manage a chorus line. The story is acted and told with interjections to explain why they have included this or that – they even mention the holocaust. The one who admits to being a virgin, points out the other is gay, but the show goes on in its quest for a backer.

Basically the laughs keep coming, the ideas keep flowing and the talent of these two men (and their pianist – Bev Kennedy) is obvious. The writing skill of Antony King and Scott Brown should also be applauded, the show is very witty. Production wise there was little to fault, except the uneven sound. It will always be difficult when you have two very different voices but that's the problem the equipment is supposed to solve, not highlight. However a very minor beef for a very good show.