



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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52 PICK UP

Theatre Simple

Odeon Theatre

Until 12 Mar 2010

Review by Stephen Davenport

"52 Pick Up" is an agreeably adroit production that's as heady and as effervescent, as Champagne. Presented by Seattle's Theatre Simple with audacity and delight, it attempts the impracticable – that's making a romance story from first meeting to break up (but taken out of sequence) cerebral - and comes remarkably close to pulling it off.

However, it manages the task of being spellbinding, funny and heart-warming through good acting and quiet confidence. There's bathos in every one of the 52 scenes - which are selected at random by the actors from playing cards they've thrown onto the stage and arbitrarily picked up - and yet its overall effect is something much more than melodrama. Because the scenes are taken out of linear sequence no two shows are alike and so it can't be called a great piece, but some of its small scenes are outstanding.

Actors, Andrew Litzky and Llysa Holland, give excellent performances and they help the play to succeed wonderfully by keeping everything natural and simple. Even though the script doesn't go where it's expected to go, the two leads stubbornly perform back and forth and somehow give the work a strange kind of logic.

Director, Monique Kleinhans keeps the set minimal – only a bed and a table sit on stage with 3 fabric playing cards suspended as a backdrop – and this allows the players to move with a sort of maniacal unpredictability and use space to highlight actions and feelings. The result is that the audience is unsure what's going to happen next and it's a blast.

"52 Pick Up" holds all the Aces.

Rating: 4 stars (out of 5)