



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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**THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES... BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION OR THE SURVIVAL OF (R)EVOLUTIONARY THEORIES IN THE FACE OF SCIENTIFIC ECCLESIASTICAL OBJECTIONS: BEING A MUSICAL COMEDY ABOUT CHARLES DARWIN (1809-1882)**

**Holden Street Theatres, Tangram Theatre and John Hinton**

**Holden Street Theatres**

Until 18 March 2012

Review by Kelly Mildenhall

John Hinton is an absolute joy in "The Origin of the Species...", displaying charisma as Charles Darwin from the outset. A comfortable climate is established as Hinton greets audience members as they enter the theatre, whilst in character. We are under no illusions that Hinton is a talented performer with a true knack for improvisation and comedy. He bemused audience members with his enquiries about their transportation to the venue, and this was an innovative way of making people feel at ease.

Neat props like a desk and bookshelf deck out the stage, and Hinton is in bookish-mode himself, so it's easy to assume that the show will be a bit stiff, but it really is anything but. This clever and professional show is high energy hilarity, and depicts Darwin from his adolescence through to his adult years. Several musical montages allow for a swift-moving performance – who knew a song about barnacles could be so amusing? – and the musical elements are timed just right length-wise.

Hinton easily trots off comical impersonations of an array of characters, complete with accents and mannerisms, and there are some great moments of absurdity throughout. He is always engaging, at times weaving amongst audience members and encouraging their involvement, in a refreshingly non-confrontational fashion. Given the demands of the 60 minute run time, jargon, songs, accents, various characters and improvisational elements, Hinton impresses with his ability to perform with vigour and positivity.

You can't help thinking: this guy would get anyone interested in science.

In fact, he'll have you at 'barnacle'.

4 stars (out of 5)