



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THE ELEMENT IN THE ROOM: A RADIOACTIVE MUSICAL COMEDY ABOUT THE DEATH AND LIFE OF MARIE CURIE

Holden Street Theatre Co.

Holden Street Theatres – The Arch
Until 12 March 2016

Review by Jamie Wright

Marie Curie. The first woman to win a Nobel prize. The only person to win two Nobel prizes in different fields (Physics and Chemistry). A legend of science, in other words. And now, like those other legends of science, Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein, Curie is the subject of a comedy musical by writer/performer John Hinton - the third in what he's calling the 'Scientrilogy'.

As with the Darwin and Einstein shows, the show is a combination of songs, monologues and audience interaction; The core of the story is Mme Curie's trip to the USA in 1921 to obtain a gram of radium, accompanied by her two daughters, but also includes asides about the discoveries Curie (both on her own and with her late husband, Pierre) made, and the realisation that radioactive material, used improperly, could be harmful.

What it also has in common with the previous shows is that it's clever, informative and - most significantly - immense fun. The energetic Hinton is a huge talent in terms of both the writing and performing; the script is witty and the songs hilariously catchy (I defy anyone to leave the theatre without hearing the radium song in their head) and well written, and he portrays not only Marie Curie but more than half a dozen different supporting characters (all women, by the way) through a combination of accent and physicality. He's also an excellent mime - which helps, given the minimalist set.

Hinton is accompanied by his wife Jo on piano accordion - we're informed in the show's introduction they were recently married - and she also contributes vocals on one number.

Edifying, entertaining and – I can't help but make at least one terrible science pun; sorrynotsorry – positively charged with energy.

Rating: 4.5 stars (out of 5)