



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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## LABELS

### Holden Street Theatre and Worklight Theatre

#### Holden Street Theatres

Until 13 March

Review by John Wells

Joe Sellman-Leava's monologue, "Labels", is an earnest, personal, funny and blindingly topical.

Opening with quotes from dubious political luminaries - and jarringly compatible bedfellows - as Idi Amin, Enoch Powell, Donald Trump and Jeremy Clarkson, with a guest appearance from our own Tony Abbott (with a passable accent!), Sellman-Leava reveals that today's xenophobic chest-thumping has a long history. The labels are the labels of small-minded racism from the ignorant to the offensive.

This is more than a show about racism. It is a personal reflection, a gentle but uncompromising revelation of the horrible damage that years of bigotry can inflict. His family stories that illustrate the relentless pall of racism work extremely well, and are very moving.

Sellman-Leava is a good comedian; he is quick-witted and engaging, but there is a tough and principled performer beneath the smiling charm.

The stage-craft is a cumbersome and some of the English references are not immediately recognizable, but overall this is a slickly produced show. Strong, deeply-felt and immediate, "Labels" is all the more powerful because of its gentle humour.

4 stars (out of five)