



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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AUTOBAHN

Butterfly Theatre

Wheatsheaf Hotel

Until 22 Jan 2017

Review by Anthony Vawser

For the latest presentation in the Beer Theatre series, director Erik Strauts has selected four (or three, depending on the night that you attend) of writer Neil LaBute's 2-person vignettes, set in the front seats of cars (either moving or parked), with all of them each showcasing one character who delivers a minimum of 95% of the talking, while the other character – usually the driver, theoretically in control - is a basically silent observer, reacting in subtle degrees to their companion's relentless chat.

This reviewer felt that Brant Eustice and Rachel Burfield shone brightest and strongest, in part due to being given the most potent and satisfying material. Bronwyn Ruciak and Rosie Williams' mother/daughter drama seems to fall a little short of the ideal levels of tension and intensity (though the venue may be a reason for this; it is difficult to fully communicate such a relatively quiet and psychologically focused text as this when fighting against the noise from a nearby bar crowd as well as passing planes).

David Salter and Matt Houston have a more overtly comic vibe in their material and their characters (though not without a certain dark ruefulness at the enduring infantilism of so many adult males in today's culture), which these two excellent actors pull off with exuberance and personality. Such qualities are also bursting from the solo performance of Laura Antoniazzi, and the actress is to be commended for coping with a last-minute abridgement of her piece (originally to have featured James King, who despite recent injury was able to silently-but-expressively contribute his presence on opening night).

It is a curious format to experience, but in the main, "Autobahn" holds the attention while providing enough intelligent observation and thoughtful revelation to be worth watching.