



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## DUSTY – THE MUSICAL

**Adelaide Festival Centre and The Production Company**

Festival Theatre

Until 22 of January 2017

Review by Fran Edwards

This show delivers not one, but two central characters. Of course they are essentially the same person Mary O'Brien, played so well by Baylie Carson and the person she evolved into, Dusty Springfield, personified by Amy Lehpamer. Not only do these two ladies sing superbly in their songs but also their harmonies are good and they both bring the characters to life.

This "Jukebox musical", which at times seems almost like a concert, covers the life of Dusty, from humble beginnings in Ealing, London to her death following a battle with breast cancer. It is not a documentary, several people in her life are combined to allow the story to flow, but it gives us an insight.

I admit that although I am a fan I did not immediately recognize Todd McKenney, playing the flamboyant hairdresser (and not camping it up), a fine performance. Also Virginia Gay looks totally different as the dresser Peg. They are major parts of this production, as are Paul Blackwell, playing Mary's father and an outrageous drag queen, and Jackie Rees who portrays the mother, and two other small parts.

Chloe Zuel is the love interest, Reno, and sings up a storm, especially in her duets with Lehpamer. In fact all the cast sing well and move well, the big numbers are a highlight, all well controlled by MD Michael Tyack. Director Jason Langley has chosen a minimalist set, which works well, and Anna Cordingley's set design allows for the changes to happen smoothly. Kudos to costume designer Isaac Lummis whose designs recreated the era beautifully.

They gave us all the big numbers, Mama's Little Girl, Stay Awhile, I Only Want to be With You, Wishin' and Hopin', The Look of Love and more and that is only in the first act. After interval the big hits such as Son of a Preacher Man and you Don't Have to Say You Love Me came along with many others from the era.

It is a show to touch the heartstrings, but get your feet tapping. There were a couple of slow spots in the second act, but this may have been the writing not the cast. The sound balance seemed to be off occasionally, but this was the first night and these things happen even with well-produced professional shows. I am sure it will come good.

If you are a Dusty fan you will never forgive yourself if you miss this one, you would swear it was the lady herself up there on stage at times.