



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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PO Box 738
MODBURY SA 5092

info@theatreguide.com.au
ABN : 93 297 960 525

THE GIRL WHO JUMPED OFF THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

Joanne Hartstone

Adelaide Botanic Garden - Noel Lothian Hall

Until 19 Mar 2017

Review by Paige Mulholland

We often hear the stories of those who head to Hollywood with a fistful of dreams and make it big, but how much do we hear about those who don't? "The Girl Who Jumped Off the Hollywood Sign" tells the story of Evie who, feeling unsuccessful and alone in the world, believes she is ready to follow in the footsteps of many of her idols, and allow Hollywood's pressures to consume her. But will she do it, and become The Girl Who Jumped Off The Hollywood Sign?

The first (and only 'real') girl who jumped off the Hollywood Sign, Peg Entwistle, has a story that is tragic in its irony. After failing to make her silver screen dreams come true in Hollywood, Entwistle threw herself from the 'H' on the Hollywood sign and ended her life. Only one day later, she received a letter offering her a lead role in a play at the Beverly Hills Playhouse, about a woman who commits suicide. Young Evie is looking to follow in her footsteps, and, standing atop the mammoth 'H', considers the other women Hollywood left wrecked in its path – Jean Harlow, Judy Garland, and countless more. But is she ready to join their number? Told in prose and the songs of her silver screen heroines, "The Girl Who Jumped Off the Hollywood Sign" is a gripping but educational account of Hollywood in the Golden Age.

Joanne Hartstone is well-rehearsed and very emotionally brave as Evie, taking the audience back through Evie's life from childhood to the top of the sign, where she now stands. Commanding the room in a one-woman show with no spectacular sets or costumes is a feat, and Hartstone manages this with style. Costumes and sets were just enough to tell the story and build an atmosphere without feeling excessive for the simple theatre, and, although it was unfortunate that you could hear WOMADelaide blasting from Botanic Park for the entire show, Hartstone's focused and dynamic performance made it impossible to be too distracted. She's obviously been practicing her 'vintage voice' – you can easily imagine her twangy voice crackling through an old wireless. Though she takes some time to warm into her American accent, overall her performance is outstanding

This is an excellent example of locally made Fringe theatre – it's exciting, accessible for theatre lovers and theatre newbies alike, and, with its choice of venue and talented cast and creative team, showcases the state at its best. As the Fringe winds down, it's worth hauling yourself out of the house one last time to see "The Girl Who Jumped Off the Hollywood Sign".

Rating: 4.5 stars (out of 5)