



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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NERVE

IKAG

The Elephant British Pub

Until 15 Jun 2019

Review by Anthony Vawser

The two characters whose first date we experience in "Nerve" could, by any objective standard, be fairly – if harshly – labelled as 'damaged goods', but this tale of their time together (from the pen of Adam Szymkowicz) manages to be both achingly believable and wholly engrossing, even sharply funny at times, while never undermining its inherent seriousness of purpose.

This production of "Nerve" has been staged with quite stunning success by director Tom Gentry. Sharing the performance space opposite Katherine Silbereisen – who matches him in quality every step of the way – Gentry has delivered an electrifying experience by expertly utilising (and sustaining) a minimal number of elements: tension, credibility, concentration, conviction...all of these crucial components can be found in two of the most accomplished performances you're likely to witness this year.

The essential contributions of make-up/SFX artist Liana Krassas and sound designer Samuel Rodda must also be made mention of – with the dash of required stage blood proving scarily realistic (so be prepared) and the speaker system blasting typical pub/club fare at occasional intervals to punctuate the drama with excellent effectiveness. Initially, one is afraid that the decision to keep understated background music running underneath the flow of conversations will prove to be a distraction, but it soon blends in very nicely.

The desire for human connection does not limit itself to those who are in a suitable state to receive it. Regardless of how healthy, wealthy, and wise we may be, whether outgoing or withdrawn, self-aware or sadly deluded – virtually everyone seeks for themselves the emotional support and trusted company that a life partner can provide. Great theatre can, for a short time, put us in the shoes of such people embarking on a quest for love, and this is what "Nerve" achieves – with a level of uncompromising insight and compassion that can truthfully be called breathtaking.

One keenly awaits the next appearance of IKAG Productions on an Adelaide stage.