



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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IT'S NOT TOO LATE UNTIL YOU'RE DEAD

post-human productions

Star Theatres

Until 16 March

Review by John Wells

Things aren't going well for Sophie. She is struggling to get through a eulogy for her recently-deceased sister Lulu. (Clearly, things aren't going too well for Lulu either.) As the dependable, conservative Sophie speaks awkwardly, she reflects on the conflicts and rivalries of life with an exuberant, outgoing sister. But what is that movement from the coffin? Why is there a slideshow? And what is Lulu doing here, arguing, cackling and performing?

Sally Hardy's play "It's Not Too Late Until You're Dead" puts Lulu in a delicious position – she is a guest at her own funeral. Who wouldn't want to have a seat at that gathering? Lulu isn't dead, but she is terminally ill – spluttering, wheezing and sucking on oxygen – and she is fighting to come to terms with the life she has lived and the legacy she will leave. There are some excellent moments of insight and emotional weight in Hardy's text. The highlights are the acerbic reflections on the innate selfishness of an actor's life, the power and unreliability of memories, familial bonds, and the strong evocation of grasping your opportunities when you can. The writing is uneven, though, and there are some quiet patches when the action is repetitive and suffers from an atmosphere of whining middle-class women.

Danni Zappia (Lulu) and Emily Burns (Sophie) give well-calibrated, strong performances. They are well cast: Zappia captures the breezy, doomed Lulu nicely, and Burns brings a wounded solidity to Sophie. They interact expertly, and are believable in showing the exasperating, scratchy love that siblings can share. But both performers struggle to bring zest to the duller moments, and the production suffers overall from being too long for the simple messages the text reveals.

Rating: 3 stars (out of 5)