



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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PO Box 738
MODBURY SA 5092

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

PILGRIMS

Oily Rag Theatre

Bakehouse Theatre

Until 10 August 2019

Review by Fran Edwards

New theatre group Oily Rag Theatre have picked a new play by New York based theatre maker Claire Kiechel, a challenging play with interweaving themes. Director Kristin Telfer has assembled a talented cast and engaged the skills of Katherine Kleeman, an emerging lighting designer, and paid great attention to the set (by Shannon Norfolk), which is well designed and functional. That being said I must admit that this was a confusing piece of theatre.

Set in a version of the future that sees efforts to colonise an inhabitable a planet 100 days flight time from Earth, two very different people are forced to share accommodation – definitely not the way they thought they would be travelling. The girl, a reluctant colonist, has been encouraged by her father to make the change. The soldier is revisiting the colony looking for redemption and expecting solitude on his journey. Their only contact with the outside world is a robot, Jasmine, who is programmed to be pleasant but controlling.

The interactions and what they reveal about the characters are where the focus is. The girl's insecurity, the soldier's guilt and probable PTSD and the strange control of the unseen captain/crew wielded by the robot. I got the issues, the treatment of original people by invading/colonising forces, the isolation and dislocation of those seeking new paths, but the script left me confused. It failed to engage me.

The sound and lighting helped to create the feeling of being in a sort of cabin, almost like a hotel room. However the changing of the interaction between the occupants, with games and dreams failed to convince and left me with too many questions.

All kudos to Oily Rag for trying to deliver new plays with complex messages but I don't think this one really hit the mark.