



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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TRAGEDY! (A NEW COMEDY)

Not Buttered Toast

National Wine Centre

Until 17 Mar 2019

Review by Anthony Vawser

It takes a great deal of bravery to put oneself out there as a performer, especially in a solo setting. Those who take on such a challenge are allowed the benefit of complete freedom to express themselves artistically, and it can be a thrill for audiences to witness a very individual and unusual perspective, working without the safety net of a collaborator.

Libby Scales (through her company Not Buttered Toast) has clearly put a lot of thought, planning, and energy into "Tragedy! (A New Comedy)", making it a distinctive experience, even when it doesn't quite succeed.

This is a somewhat difficult show to summarise succinctly, shifting as it does from broadly slapstick comic business to relatively erudite narration with a somewhat philosophical tone to it. Dressed for the majority of an hour in a toga that evokes Classical Greek gods, Scales' show professes to take the perspective of a deity attempting to reclaim the attention and respect of a jaded modern populace that no longer believe in higher powers.

Utilising multimedia to engage in conversations with herself, repeatedly venerating Dolly Parton and her music, demonstrating an undeniable vocal gift of her own that she nonetheless seems determined to downplay, Scales' material is both varied and variable, while her success rate is decidedly mixed. Nonetheless, "Tragedy! (A New Comedy)" is also an unusual and ambitious effort, with a particularly striking final quarter, one that makes the overall experience marginally recommendable.

Rating: 3 stars (out of 5).