



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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EUPHORIA

CountryArts SA

Various Locations

Until 19 June

Review by Janice Bailey

'Euphoria' is a new play written by Emily Steel and commissioned by CountryArts SA. The play examines the benefits of rural life as well as the many challenges experienced, particularly with regard to mental health. Over a period of two years, writer Emily Steel and Health Creative Producer Alison Howard spent time travelling to communities meeting with residents. The end product is a confrontingly true depiction of life in a typical rural town. Personally, I can vouch for the authenticity of the content of this play, having moved from Sydney and finding myself in a South Australian rural town as a single parent, working as a teacher and Counsellor. Mental health issues in these areas are very real. As a school counsellor, not only did I spend my time counselling young people but their parents as well. I also experienced the awful aftermath of several suicides which have an effect on the whole community.

Ashton Malcolm and James Smith are extraordinary in their portrayal of numerous characters, moving seamlessly between each character. Not only did they make this transition with apparent ease, I was in awe of the amount of dialogue they had to deliver with not a hint of hesitation. Meg Wilson's incredible set design, Emily Steel's writing, coupled with the ability of the two actors to embody the many characters they inhabited and move and change the set, was extraordinary. Mental health IS a huge issue, not necessarily because of lifestyle but because of the lack of facilities available, as well as the reticence to seek help because of the stigma involved and the fact that it is difficult to keep 'secrets' as everyone knows everyone else and what is happening in their lives. The positive is that in these regional towns there is always someone to lend a hand and work together for a good cause.

Kudos to CountryArtsSA for commissioning this play about such an important and prevalent subject and to all involved in bringing this play to the stage. Bravo!

CountryArts SA Regional dates

2 June, Port Pirie; 4 June, Streaky Bay; 9-10 June, Port Lincoln; 11-12 June, Whyalla; 13-15 Port Augusta; 16 June, Burra; 18 June, Tanunda; 19 June, Goolwa – bookings through State Theatre Company or CountryArts SA.