



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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MENTAL AS EVERYTHING

Adelaide Cabaret Festival

Quartet Bar

Until 26 June 2021

By Helen Karakulak

Damon Smith and Adam Coad present bouncy original songs interweaved with candid commentary in the modest and endearing "Mental as Everything". The show centres lived experiences of mental illness, as Smith divulges his experience with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and bipolar disorder, and Coad discusses social phobia and anxiety.

The seemingly deliberate unscripted nature of their monologues led to a few stumbles and a disjointed flow, disrupting the delivery of a few punchlines. However, they recovered from the occasional slips and immersed the audience into a conversation reminiscent of one you might share with a psychologist, or over a wine with a dear friend.

With references to notable books and Beyond Blue statistics, the performance cements its credibility and reiterates the seriousness of its subject matter without being overbearing. Their light and digestible delivery brings genuineness to a conversation they're working to normalise through their work as artists.

The pair are visibly nervous, with some awkwardness and static movements not typical of a run-of-the-mill meticulously rehearsed cabaret, presenting a brilliantly raw vulnerability in their commentary. Their stage presence settles comfortably when seated at their instruments, Smith on piano and Coad on drums.

Their voices blend together well in a collection of original tracks that encompass the high highs and low lows of mental ill-health. Use of comedic timing and outlandish rhyme in songs such as 'When Panic Attacks, Attack' are sure to garner a giggle. Coad is particularly impressive when playing the ukulele and drums simultaneously.

This production is a great use of cabaret to engage audiences in an issue that's been lingering louder for many given the recent state of the world. Overall, Smith and Coad's awkwardly endearing performance of "Mental as Everything" is insightful and entertaining.