



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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PO Box 738
MODBURY SA 5092

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

RABBIT HOLE

Joh Hartog Productions

Bakehouse Theatre

Until 8 May

Review by Janice Bailey

It is always a pleasure to visit the Bakehouse Theatre due to their reputation of presenting first-class theatrical experiences and a welcoming atmosphere. The current offering, "Rabbit Hole" is no exception – in fact, the production is possibly the best I have seen so far this year. This play, written by David Lindsay-Abaire and directed by Joh Hartog, covers a difficult subject but the end product is exceptional.

The story tackles every parent's nightmare – the death of a child; in this case, Becca and Howie's four-year old, Danny, through an unnecessary accident. The Broadway production of "Rabbit Hole" was nominated for five Tony Awards and has been made into a film starring Nicole Kidman.

The play begins with an introduction to Becca, a difficult role played with finesse and a balance of struggling with grief and trying to maintain 'normalcy', by Krystal Cave. Becca wants to remove all traces of Danny and try and move on with living, while Howie, played with a balance of strength and fragility by David Daradan, wants to keep Danny in the present, by watching home movies of the child. The performances of both the grieving parents never falter. Stefanie Rossi shines once again in her role of Izzy, Becca's sister, who is the antithesis of Becca – unafraid to show her feelings and very much a 'free spirit' and wanting to get on with life. Gail Morrison as Nat, the mother of the two sisters, is forthright and 'says it like it is'. Coming from a background of film, this is Gail's first foray into live theatre and she plays her role confidently, providing the 'lighter' moments in what is a serious and confronting topic.

We only meet Danny through a voiceover, provided by twins, Aston and Max Hughes, providing the reality of the overwhelming emotions caused by the loss of a child. Liam Hennessy makes his stage debut as Jason, the young driver of the car which caused the untimely death of Danny, demonstrating sensitivity and confidence.

Director, Joh Hartog's set design is simple and effective, not detracting from the performances of the actors. Stephen Dean's lighting and sound design create atmosphere and purpose. Samantha Hughes, in her debut as Production Manager, uses her experience as an actor in TV and film to keep it all together.

This is a difficult story to tell but everyone involved in this Production deserves heartfelt congratulations – this was underscored by the standing ovation from a very appreciative audience. If you only get to see one show this year – "Rabbit Hole" at the Bakehouse should be the one.