



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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WATCHLIST

South Australian Playwrights Theatre

Bakehouse Theatre

Until 12 June 2021

By Helen Karakulak

Directed by Lisa Harper Campbell, The South Australian Playwrights Theatre production of 'Watchlist' is dark and delightful. Bringing up questions of what we owe to one another and our planet, this production feels more relevant than ever as climate change looms and environmental activists feel a pull of radicalism to defend the defenceless.

The show follows the relationship between the directionless Basil Pepper (Gianluca Noble) and the bold Delia (Katherine Sortini) as she disrupts his passivity, drawing him into rebellion.

With lighting design by Stephen Dean, the red and green washes across the stage and interrogation spotlights effectively draw audiences into the thriller aspect of the production. This is complimented successfully by use of sound by Sascha Budimski, with songs transitioning between scenes capturing the high highs and low lows.

Cloaked in mystery, Sortini shines as Delia. Sortini's passionate angsty characterisation subverts the manic pixie dream girl trope as her relationship with Basil feels tangible despite the secrecy and strategy that lay beneath it.

Noble's portrayal of the boyish Basil becoming more confident throughout the show is brilliant. Audiences are introduced to a comically bumbling, slightly awkward boy with a crush. His journey into activism effectively captures the slope of social consciousness that must be navigated as our eyes are opened to consequence. Notably, Basil's relationship with his mother, Marie (Katie O'Reilly), is a source of great humour and adds to the suspense as you wonder what role Marie has to play in the grand scheme of things. O'Reilly is brilliant, her dry delivery brings sass to the character but still manages to convey that there is affection there, even if it's delivered differently.

From interrogator to bumbling bartender, Matt Hawkins' stage presence is powerful. He is brilliant as Norman, wearing many hats in this production and cementing themes of surveillance culture as questions of privacy are explored. If you get caught up in confusion with some of the more complex themes of the production, Eddie Morrison's flamboyant portrayal of the eccentric Roger will get you out of your head and off your seat laughing. Morrison's punchy delivery of quick-witted dialogue is sure to garner a giggle.

Much of the humour of the production plays into the political, with nods to differentiating between communism and socialism, and references that encapsulate the differences between being socially aware and socially active. Written by Alex Vickery-Howe, the complexities of 'Watchlist' could keep you wondering for days. Whether you think you're able to hold your own in garden party chat about how Gillard was robbed or believe in avenging victims of animal cruelty, this show will make you question the effectiveness of either.

While 'Watchlist' is a somewhat ethical overload, the genre-blending of mystery and romance accompanied by lively production elements and such a talented cast makes this a must see.