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VIRGINS

MBM Holden Cabaret
Holden Street Theatres

Review by Theresa Dolman

"Virgins", by local identity Matt Byrne, clammers on board the maiden flight of Inncontinental Airlines from Sydney to London, with a stop over at Changi. The four talented actors, Cathie Oldfield, Paul Mayes, Chantel Dimasi and Byrne himself, bring to life not just the cabin crew, but a cross section of the passengers too: the drunken football team, the tipsy netballers, the naughty nuns, the kids, and a variety of individuals.

The original full length show was a sell-out at the 2004 Adelaide Festival Fringe. The show presented at Holden Street is the 90-minute version presented at the 2004 Edinburgh Festival.

The actors are all able to change instantly from their main roles as cabin staff to their other roles. Oldfield is one minute totally in charge as her main character, Cabin Supervisor Margaret, then in the next scene burping her way through beer as one of the badly behaved footballers on an end of season binge. Mayes and Dimasi also fare well as hunky Carbone and airhead Cassie, suddenly becoming two bratty children. And of course Byrne himself goes from the bitchy Neil to the psychotic pilot with ease, making you think twice about ever getting on a plane again.

This shortened version of the play is all gags, and does not really allow any of the main characters to develop to the stage where you can empathise with them. But the audience didn't seem to mind, and laughed at every punch line.