



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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FATHER'S DAY

Tea Tree Players

Tea Tree Players Theatre

Until 23 Feb 2008

Review by Laraine Ball

This cathartic play by Eric Chappell is not one of his best.

Henry Willows is divorced and alone and apparently at peace with his existence. This peace is shattered when son Matthew arrives on his doorstep with his young, pregnant, punk girlfriend in tow seeking shelter. Matters escalate still more when his ex-wife Sue arrives to retrieve her son and Henry takes advantage of her presence to reclaim his family.

Whilst the dialogue is witty, the text remains somewhat frivolous and the underlying emotions, such as bitterness and anger, are not really tapped at all, making the whole premise of a rift being mended rather implausible.

As a script, the play is difficult and director Iris Petitt has managed it well in terms of pace and comic timing, but has been unable to get below the surface of the words and bring the reality of emotion and passion alive in the characters.

Terry Boswell, as Henry, is smooth and persuasive; he seems to enjoy the fast banter and word play of the character. Cathie Oldfield as Sue, his ex-wife, is smart and intelligent and shows some fleeting glimpses of her inner turmoil.

Paul Briske as Henry's son Matthew is bright and confident, almost glib, and very determined to have his own way. Jessica Barlow as Christine is wonderful; with hardly any lines at all, she manages to convey everything that we need to know about her purely by her costume, facial expressions and body language.

The play is set in Henry's living room, a nicely made box set designed by Don Stuart, with glass sliding doors and furnished in a pleasant if fairly ordinary manner.

Costumes are contemporary and relatively non-descript, except Christine's whose punk outfit and make-up are marvellous.

This is an amusing show and enjoyable so long as you take it at face value and not expect anything deep and meaningful. Go for the fun of it.