



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THE MAIDS

Scarlett Entertainment

Bakehouse Theatre

Until 23 June

Review by Paige Mulholland

With deception, impersonation, relentless dialogue and constantly-shifting relationships at play, it's easy to get lost in "The Maids". The relationship between the two main characters, maids Solange and Claire, moves from controlling, to sisterly, to vicious, to sexual and back again in the blink of an eye. These complicated factors, combined with the fact that the two sisters are on stage conversing for almost the entire hour-long production, mean that you need two brave, well-rehearsed and talented performers to do the job. Luckily, Peta Shannon and Kate Bonney are just that.

"The Maids" explores the ideas of social class and dominance through the story of Solange and Claire, two French maids who feel a conflicting mix of love and hate for their mistress and for each other. Claire and Solange, when left alone, act out elaborate scenes where they murder "Madame" (although, with so much focus on detail and build-up, they never quite make it to the murder part). The sisters develop a plot to make their fantasies a reality and do away with Madame for good, but their plan does not go smoothly.

With the sisters constantly shifting between their fantasies and reality, and the tension between the two of them waxing and waning, the whole show is constantly in a state of flux, and can be hard to keep up with. This production finished ten minutes earlier than advertised, and much of this comes down to pacing – slowing things down a bit would give the audience more time to digest, and more room to make the most out of these constantly changing dynamics.

Pacing aside, the production is overall very strong. Kate Bonney, Angelika Bailey and Peta Shannon are well matched as Claire, Madame and Solange respectively and cope remarkably well with the confronting content and wordy nature of the show. The set and costumes are also beautiful and flattering, obviously designed with the effortless elegance of the French in mind.

Drama enthusiasts will find plenty to love in this professional, detail-oriented production. Aside from feeling a little rushed, this show is strong all-round. You should feel a little rushed too – rushed to find another friend who's not afraid of a little challenging theatre and take them to this show!