



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## THE EMBRYOS

**Duende Theatre Company**

**The Womb, 118 King William Street**

Until 13 Mar 2010

Review by Richard Flynn

The best shows in the Fringe are often those that take the risks, push the boundaries a little further, handle the tough topics and do it exceptionally well. "The Embryos" is one such show.

It's a fascinating, new Australian play by Alan Grace, presented by a new Adelaide theatre company, and performed by four very fine actors, well cast in this drama about 20-somethings' relationships, shot with humour – but not too much.

Nic English, as Beringer with a passion for the novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky, gives a consistently mesmerising performance. Every fibre, most of all his face, is feeling the elation, struggling with the pain, the despondency and the exhaustion as he is reduced to a stage where he has absolutely nothing left but to sink to a foetal position after defacing a wall of posters in red paint with "Jesus Christ! Help me! I am lost!"

Russell Hutchinson is his younger, more 'hip' brother, Harstus, whose dependence on alcohol and drugs is his way of coping when life becomes too harsh. He's an ideal foil for his brother. They share a love for the Russian novelist, but more surprisingly, the same girls! You get the impression, however, that, if it came to the crunch, these boys would choose the relationship they have with each other as brothers, rather than the relationships they seek desperately with girls.

The girls are played by Dee Easton as Katerin and Ruth Fallon as Bella. They both give very powerful performances: the outcome of each scene seeming to be reversed completely in the scene which follows.

Easton's trysts with English are particularly high octane, but Fallon, as a pregnant Bella – who's the father? – gives as well as she gets.

The harrowing themes are played out in nothing larger than a wide but shallow office space – which gives us the uneasy feeling of being voyeurs or at least tacit witnesses to what unfolds.

Director Krystal Brock and her cast should be well pleased with their "baby". And you will be too.

Rating: 4.5 stars (out of 5)