



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## **MOLLY'S SHOES**

**Accidental Productions**

**Bakehouse Theatre**

Until 4 Jun 2011

Review by Jamie Wright

Flashback to the late 1990s. David is a self-confessed geek; imagine his surprise when he wins the affection of the decidedly non-geeky Elspeth, after they meet in Professor Molly Taffy's undergraduate physics course. But after his studies lead him to ask questions of a more religious than scientific nature, the two drift apart. In the present, an ailing Molly is suffering from dementia, and David is caring for his old mentor in her last days and wrestling with ethical questions on a much more personal level.

Alex Vickery-Howe's Stoppard-esque script weaves together the difficulties of a relationship between two strong-minded people, the philosophical examination of the relationship between science and religion, and the emotional and ethical implications of watching a loved one suffering from an untreatable, debilitating condition – with scenes alternating between present and past.

Under Joh Hartog's direction, the cast find both the humour and the sadness in the script; pace is maintained, though the occasional scene sees a drop in intensity – an example being the one where Elspeth reads from the newspaper, which feels slightly out of place.

Both Tim Smith and Rachel Jones play late-1990s David and Elspeth with energy, intensity and humour, contrasting well against Katie O'Reilly's grounded, sensible Professor Taffy. Present-day David and Elspeth are played by John Maurice and Joanne Hartstone; both do well with the more serious tone and briefer appearances. Bridget Walters, as present-day Professor Taffy, gets the best material – both comic and tragic – and is excellent at both.

Tammy Bowden's set design is minimalist, allowing for the frequent scene changes – both between and within the two periods – and the projected animations were effective. Stephen Dean's lighting was mostly functional early on, aiding in the scene transitions but was cleverer in the later scenes when used for impact.

Weaving together emotional and intellectual threads like these is a tough ask and while this production succeeds with the former, the latter aspect is less satisfying, as there isn't enough time to give the complex issues the treatment they deserve. As a result, we end up with less than the amount needed for a real examination but more than that required to provide depth to the characters.

This flaw, though, only detracts somewhat from an otherwise clever, funny and genuinely touching production.