



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

[www.theatreguide.com.au](http://www.theatreguide.com.au)

Supporting live theatre in South Australia

PO Box 738  
MODBURY SA 5092

[info@theatreguide.com.au](mailto:info@theatreguide.com.au)  
ABN : 93 297 960 525

---

## 13 – A NEW MUSICAL

### Adelaide Youth Theatre

Adelaide College of the Arts – Stables

Until 4 March 2012

Review by Chris Eaton

"13" tells the story of Evan, a just-turned-teenage Jewish boy from New York City whose life gets turned upside down when his newly divorced mother moves him from the bright lights of the big city to Appleton, Indiana (a.k.a. nowheresville), casting his plans for a rocking bar mitzvah into disarray. Evan must gain the friendship of the coolest kids in his new school so the party to anoint him as a man is everything he imagines.

The principal roles in this production are shared with each performance of the show featuring the principals of the prior show in the chorus. That said, I am confident that the abundantly talented cast that I have reviewed is handsomely matched by their alternates.

Benji Riggs plays Evan and looks every bit the stereotype of a young Jewish boy (with the possible exception of his height). His role is a mighty task, in vocals and depth of character but Riggs shines, with "Becoming a Man" and the duet "Tell Her" as highlights. Patrice (played by Sarah Thorpe) is Evan's bookish neighbour and labelled by the members of the school as an outcast. Thorpe played her role in sublime measure with strident vocals that raised the goosebumps and the emotions. The role of Archie, a fellow outcast who suffers from muscular dystrophy is played by Jamie Hornsby with comedic and vocal deft beyond his years. Lucy, drawn in the mould of "Mean Girls" is played with relish by Georgia Payze, while her best friend Kendra (the schools "It" girl) is well played by Madeleine Russell. Rounding out the major principals is Brett (the most popular guy in school) sharply played by a brutish James 'Beatles' O'Brien. Other performances of note are that of Connor Olsson-Jones (Eddie) and Christian Bartlett (Malcolm), both hilarious in their efforts. Their bluesy "Bad Bad News" is a highlight.

First time director Rodney Hutton has shown great feel for "13". His direction is notable in the wholeness of the characters each of the performers present and their honest, measured portrayals. Hutton wisely lets the music, lyrics and book do the talking; his direction doesn't interfere or detract.

The youthful-looking band led by musical director Michelle Nightingale should also be commended for excellent playing of a challenging score and – importantly – never drowning out the singers despite their close proximity. Choreography by Mel George and its execution is pleasing and suitably minimal in this very voice-and-lyric-centric piece.

The only lowlights were a few issues with microphones and as a general note the choice of venue. Though good spaces are very hard to come by at this time of year, one with actual seats would be better suited to a 90 minute show.

There is a good reason this show has been completely sold out at this year's Fringe. Talk is of a return season later in the year so keep an eye on our "what's on" page.

Rating: 4.5 stars (out of 5)