

Songs of Grace and Redemption

📅 8 November, 2010 👤 Anne-Marie Peard

Songs of Grace and Redemption is a tense, pacey piece of theatre. It is urban angst and relationship chaos. It is tenderness and brotherly love. It is murder and lies. It is interesting and engaging. It is modern theatre.

**TAP Gallery Theatre, 278 Palmer Street
Darlinghurst, Australia**

Muddle five mavericks in a grungy bar.
Lace with bawdy Icelandic jokes.
Garnish with Lycra.

From the writer of the runaway hit 'Bone' comes the Australian premiere of this tender urban fairytale. Five city-dwellers' private lives, slung together in a cocktail of black humour and good intentions – with a generous slosh of the risqué!

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Redemption is a play that you have to be ready for. It doesn't allow you to be lazy and let it all wash over you as there are nuances and language that deserve your attention. This cast of six works well together. Their collective chemistry holds your interest. Whilst not every player is equal in their ability or delivery, the performances of Clayton Moss, Kathryn Schuback and Nathaniel Scotcher were the high points of the evening.

The interplay between Moss and Schuback as brother and sister, was sweet, engaging and funny. Schuback's characterisation was a joy to watch and her abilities were almost worthy of an Oscar nomination as the audience faultlessly believed her story and her ailment.

Moss' TV credentials serve him well to be able to work with a small space and his good looks only underpinned a credible performance as a man conflicted between his heart and his head.

Scotcher as the manic dreamer was great and stole the scene whenever he was in it. His talents are worth looking out for.

John Donnelly's script was good though it had moments of flatlining. There seemed to be too much going on and some of the relationships, particularly between Moss's character and his Icelandic love interest in the local 'net cafe. This relationship served no great purpose to the piece or if it did, it was clearly lost on this reviewer. There were also too many scenes in the script making it feel overly long.

The set design was simple and having the actors manoeuvre the set between scenes was efficient for the play though slightly distracting.

The sound design was good, and its combination with blaring light effects was a nice idea though with the length of the play, was a little tiresome.

O'Keefe's direction was competent and clever making good use of the space. Having the actors in a small theatre added more weight and emotion to the piece and O'Keefe commanded the space well.

Songs of Grace and Redemption is an example of modern life and how it all intersects. It shows the freedom and dangers of social media and the values of brotherly love. Whilst the after effects may leave you a little on edge, it's that nervous energy that makes us human and how we react is what defines us.

Bookings: 1300 GET TIX or www.moshtix.com.au

Performance times: Preview Tues 2 Nov 8pm, Opening Night Wed 3 Nov, Performances Tues – Sat 8pm, Sun 5pm

Tickets: \$27/\$22/\$15(preview)



Anne-Marie Peard

Anne-Marie spent many years working with amazing artists at arts festivals all over Australia. She's been a freelance arts writer for the last 10 years and teaches journalism at Monash University.

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