

BETWEEN TWO WAVES

State Theatre Company of South Australia - Umbrella Program
Bakehouse Theatre

Until 25 Oct 2014



Review by [Linda Edwards](#)

"Between Two Waves" is an interesting, witty, and challenging piece of theatre written by WA writer and actor Ian Meadows, and brought to the Bakehouse by Director Corey McMahon and the State Theatre Company of South Australia.

The play is hard to follow in the beginning because of the time-shifting, but the frequent references to T.S. Eliot's poem "Burnt Norton" give us the clue: Time present and time past/ Are both perhaps present in time future,/And time future contained in time past. Time blurs, and in the end even overlaps.

Sydney has been brought to a standstill by storms and floods that have disrupted power supplies and damaged almost everything climate scientist Daniel owns, including hard drives containing a decade's worth of work on climate projections. Time shifts back and forth between the present, in which insurance adjuster Grenelle assesses Daniel's claim, the recent past in which Daniel meets and falls in love with bubbly secretary Fiona, and a traumatic past event that still haunts Daniel.

Daniel is so obsessed and frightened by his projections of the future for the planet that he can barely cope with the present. He has no idea how to handle the prospect of being a father, and is not even sure it is a good idea to bring a child into a world that he sees as doomed.

All of which sounds depressing, but the play is far from that. There is plenty of humour amid the anguish, and the sub-plots, character developments and surprises keep the audience captivated.

Matt Crook is riveting as Daniel. The part runs a gamut of emotions from hyperventilating panic attacks to love to terror, embarrassment, anger, and depression, and Crook handles them all with confidence and quiet strength. He is a powerful actor and the part could have been written for him.

Ellen Steele is strong, funny, and believable as the quirky girlfriend who, unlike Daniel, is very much in the present. Why such a colourful character would be attracted to a nerdy geek like Daniel is never really clear, but she makes us believe it anyway. The scene in which she brings Daniel out of an anxiety attack with slow, loving kisses, is the most beautiful of several notable scenes in the play.

Elena Carapetis, as insurance adjuster Grenelle, is a joy to watch. Her timing is perfect, and her characterisation is well thought out and nuanced. She is also very funny. James Edwards as Jimmy is less successful. The script gives him little to do, and he seems to overdo the little he has.

The set, sound and lighting are simple and effective, but the live audio-visual of Daniel being interviewed is off-putting because of a time delay in the live sound and the audio-visual image.

"Between Two Waves" is a fascinating play, well acted, directed and produced, and it leaves the audience with something to think about, but it is much more about human relationships and frailty and how we are affected by our own anxiety, fear, and despondence than it is about climate change. It is well worth seeing.