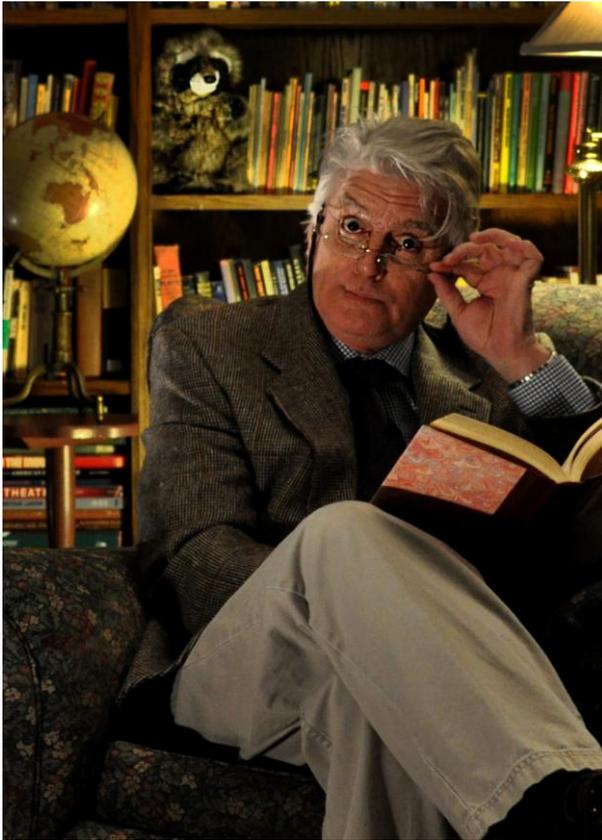


BWW Review: THE PROFESSOR – ADELAIDE FRINGE 2019 at Bakehouse Theatre



Reviewed by Barry Lenny, Tuesday 19th February 2019.

Written by Brian Parks, directed by **John Clancy**, and performed by Bob Paisley, collectively known as the Central Standard Theatre, **The Professor** is presenting his final lecture on Western Civilisation. Paisley is another international artist who has been regularly making the trek to Adelaide for a few years, bringing high-quality theatre to our Fringe.

The eccentric professor (aren't most of them eccentric, if not downright mad?) bustles into the lecture theatre, struggling under the weight of a bulky boxful of folders, books, and other paraphernalia, breathless from his rush. His planned lecture has had to be revised at the last moment, on instructions from the faculty, and he has a massive amount to get through, beginning with mathematics, moving on to theatre, then literature, and art, not to mention fainting poets and shipwrecks, but why should dance be included, he asks?

Making notes on the blackboard, consulting his folder of the topics he has been told to cover, strumming on his ukulele to deliver a very funny song, rambling somewhat, digressing from his topics, and finally revealing his breakthrough

discovery, and the reason that this is to be his final lecture, the professor keeps his students riveted and in stitches from the laughter. To elaborate further on his lecture would spoil it for those yet to attend, but, be assured, it is hilarious as well as informative. If nothing else, you'll learn how to quickly get to the front of a long, slow-moving queue.

Paisley rips into the script, a brilliant piece of writing by Parks, at a breakneck pace, firing facts and fun at the audience like a theatrical machine gun. Clancy's direction is unerring. There is more than a touch of lunacy in this surreal work, juxtaposed against some genuine, serious learning. Don't worry, though, there won't be a test afterwards.

Paisley is an unstoppable comic force, filled with energy and enthusiasm. He sweeps up the audience in the palms of his hands and carries them before him on his tidal wave of compounding hilarity. His characterisation is incisive, certainly reminding me at times of people in whose lecture theatres I have found myself over the decades, and perhaps some of my past students might say the same of me. Paisley will send you out wishing that you could have attended all of the professor's lectures during the semester. He was aided and abetted in his academic endeavours by John Story on lights and sound. Be sure to enrol for this one, and catch Oysters and All Change, too. You can see all three works in one evening at the Bakehouse, but be quick.