

## **EQUUS**

### **Adapt Enterprises** **Bakehouse Theatre**

Until 26 Nov 2016

Review by [Maggie Wood](#)

A boy blinds six horses and is put into the care of a troubled psychiatrist to restore him to normality.

Peter Shaffer's remarkable play "Equus" can be a challenge for both producer and audience. Its text takes us to the intersections of science and metaphysics, reality and dreams, the carnal and the divine, worship and subservience, control and freedom.

There is also a challenge in how to stage such a play, revealing its complexity without interrupting the relationship between the intensity of the event and audience's absorption in the event.

That challenge has been beautifully met by Adapt Enterprises in its Bakehouse Theatre run.

Ross Vosvotekas as both director and in his role as psychiatrist Martin Dysart has assembled a team of actors, technicians and creatives to deliver a multi-media production that is a seamless and enthralling evening.

As Dysart, Vosvotekas is restrained – quiet, even. His words directed at the audience narrate the events as well as revealing his own doubts about his work. He knows he's good at it – but he's not sure if he is actually doing any good through it.

Ben Gatehouse as the troubled youth Alan Strang is captivating. The role of Strang is a fearsome one to truly grasp for any actor, but Gatehouse fearlessly grabs all it has to offer and executes the role without missing a beat. Mysterious, frightening and heartbreaking as his shell cracks open and the vulnerabilities tumble out leaving him raw, and at the mercy of the world – a great performance.

There are solid and deft supporting performances from the 'Greek chorus' – Petra Taylor as Hesther, Olivia Fairweather as Jill, Rob Donnarumma as Dalton and Chris Galipo and Rick Mills as Alan's parents Dora and Frank.

Nicole Endacott is all business and care as the nurse, and special mention must go to Ezra Rex, making his acting debut as the Horseman, whose physicality and carriage convey the majesty of the horse with fine emotional reality.

As the play reaches its disturbing climax, and we learn of what really happened that fateful night in the stables, the audience leaves with the playwright's questions spoken through Dysart; must passion always be accompanied by pain, and is a 'normal' life something to be desired, or avoided?

"Equus" is certainly one of South Australia's theatrical highlights of 2016.