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Theatre Review: Equus

BY [ALEX DUNKIN](#) ON NOVEMBER 15, 2016 [ARTS](#), [ENTERTAINMENT](#), [PERFORMING ARTS REVIEWS](#), [WHAT'S ON](#)
Presented by **Adapt Enterprises**
Reviewed 12 November 2016

Adapt Enterprises takes on playwright Peter Shaffer's **Equus** under the guidance of director and actor Ross Vosvotekas.

Equus follows the investigations and treatment by psychiatrist Martin Dysart (Vosvotekas) of his young patient Alan Strang (Ben Gatehouse), whose religious fascination with horses and sexual confusion drove him to blind six horses in a local stable. Dysart's intrigue with Strang develops to the point where the line blurs between who is and who should be the one being treated during the sessions.

The assortment of local actors put on a generally effective performance of a play that has been labelled a modern classic. It offers potentially difficult territory and themes for an amateur production to navigate. However, they held the script up well and tweaked the play to focus more on the actors and away from props.

Chris Galipo in the role of Alan's mother, Dora Strang, was a particular stand out on the night. She presented a believably religious and idealistic mother struggling to cope with the actions of her son. She looked natural in the role with every note of her performance, especially the dark monologue, on cue and captivating. She was assisted by an equally solid Rick Mills in the role of Frank Strang, Alan's father. Their on stage banter provided sharp contrast between the attitudes of the married characters. They also presented experience in their acting highlighting the difference in maturity on stage between their work and some of the early career actors.

Gatehouse was vocally potent in the role of Alan Strang, using the tone in his voice to cast the naivety of the character and enabling the religious passion to shine through when required. His physical movements appeared a little short in their actions during moments such as the miming of brushing the horses and the brutality of the final scene. This, however, is a rather minor critique considering the complexities in assuming the role of Alan.

The actors seemed to settle into their roles more within the second act, providing for a stronger performance more broadly. Vosvotekas' stiffness as he shifted between the position of narrating directly to the audience and then to the other characters lessened allowing more for the sense of Dysart as an older, experienced psychiatrist to come through.

Petra Taylor as Hesther Solomon and Olivia Fairweather as Jill Mason worked well in their roles and presented the characters in a softer position to add some level of comfort and relatability to the themes of the play. Rob Donnarumma as Harry Dalton, Ezra Rex as a Young Horseman, and Nicole Endacott as Nurse, played rather minor roles in the play but took on multiple roles within the production of the play, such as providing sounds and background emotion to add emphasis to particular moments of the narrative. Their work guided the play and assisted in highlighting key moments in the lead actors performances.

Overall the lighting, sound and video production was choreographed nicely and well timed during the play. In a couple moments the speakers did cut over the actors lines and the lights darkened a little too far, but this didn't throw off the actors and the general smoothness of the production.

This production of **Equus** presents a competent and minimalist approach to a psychologically tense play.

Reviewed by **Alex Dunkin**

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Venue: Main Theatre, Bakehouse Theatre

Season: 10-26 November 2016

Duration: 2 Hours plus interval

Tickets: \$15 – \$28

Bookings: www.bakehousetheatre.com