



Adelaide Fringe review 2018: Gratiano

Craig Cook, The Advertiser
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Gratiano

Theatre

Rating **¹/₂**

Bakehouse Theatre

Until March 3

IF you ever tremble when you hear of Shakespeare at the Fringe, fear not in the hands of UK writer and actor, Ross Ericson who delivers a brilliant, tense, taught, politically edgy 20th century update of scenes from *The Merchant of Venice*.

Echoing Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Ericson elevates minor character, Gratiano, to top billing, and transports him to the Venice of the 1950s still reverberating with memories of Mussolini's Blackshirts.

Racism, fascism and personal revelation all get a workout in this beautifully crafted Pinteresque monologue, as Ericson skilfully portrays a man far more complex and considered — grappling with his past and the way ahead — than a cockeyed cockney accent might convey.

This is a sophisticated, satisfying production with bravura acting deserving of full audiences in a larger venue.

Only two performances remain — February 28 and March 3 — so please don't miss it.