



## Theatre Review: Proof

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BY [BRIAN GODFREY](#) ON JULY 14, 2018 [ARTS](#), [BREAKING](#), [ENTERTAINMENT](#), [PERFORMING ARTS](#), [PERFORMING ARTS REVIEWS](#), [WHAT'S ON](#)

Presented by **Adapt Enterprises Pty Ltd**

Reviewed 13 July 2018

It's always encouraging to see a group producing a play which has been acclaimed for its open exploration of a problem that is all too often swept under the carpet. **Proof** doesn't shy away from its subject matter as it explores genius, and its propensity to affect the mental health of those who have the ability to see things far beyond the reach of most day to day humans. David Auburn's play was lauded when first produced, winning accolades in the more prestigious American Awards of 2001, including Best Play in both the Drama Desk Awards and the Tony Awards, Outstanding Play in the Lucille Lortel Awards, Best Actress in the Drama Desk Awards and the Tony Awards, Best Director in in the Tony Awards and the highly coveted Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

The play is text-book drama exploring the consequences of relationships, family, fear of inherited behavior, mental illness, sibling rivalry and the effect of love as a salve for fear.

I am always impressed when a group of actors take on the challenge of such a highly regarded piece of writing and give it their best shot. Director/Producer Ross Vosvotekas has brought together a group of actors who attempt to inject new life into this renowned play. On the whole it works well, largely due to Auburn's clever and sparkling dialogue.

I thought the set worked well and the chalked mathematical problems covering the walls were a nice touch. It's technically adept, though the scene changes in pale blue light set the actors in stark relief as they changed the scenes ambling through the set, out of character. This tended to interrupt and not move the journey of the play forward.

Nicole Endacott shows range and depth and the promise of something spectacular in her interpretation of Catherine, the mentally fragile young woman who fears she will travel down the same road of mental illness as her Father. I felt that with a little more input from those around her she would have injected a lot more truth and a lot less acting into the role.

Krystal Brock as Claire had the hauteur required for the role, giving us all the "I know best" attitude every older sibling taunts their younger sisters with. Her powerful and crisp approach to the character allowed her to dominate when she needed to at just the right level, and her sense of empathy and care for her younger sister's dilemma allowed her to explore and discover some fine detail. Though I did miss the snap of a decent American accent to assist the characterisation.

Rick Mills gave a solid and dependable rendition of Robert in both his earthly and ghostly states. He appeared, of all the characters on stage, to have a clear vision of his journey through the play.

Ross Vosvotekas as Hal gave a solid performance that would have benefited from a little more gravitas. I think it is always difficult to allow yourself to fully enter into your character's journey when you have also directed a play. There is always the underlying watchful eye of the director present whilst you are on stage. His is an interesting portrayal of the antagonist in the piece. In the programme notes Vosvotekas tells us it gave him the opportunity to use his stand-up comedy skills; I thought this weakened Hal's presence and made him less effective than he would have been had he been played straight. He is, after all, a university lecturer in the mathematics department.

Overall, I enjoyed seeing **Proof** again. It has been a favourite play of mine for many years. It's still thought-provoking, intelligent and a damn good play and well worth a visit to the Bakehouse Theatre. As I touched on before, the play is set in Chicago and the rhythms of the text are very American. If you are going to put on an American play and not use the accents, it might be a courtesy to your audience to let them know why.

Reviewed by **Adrian Barnes**

**Venue:** The Studio – Bakehouse Theatre

**Season:** July 11-14. 18 – 21, 25 -28 at 7.30pm

**Tickets:** \$30.00 Conc \$28.00

**Bookings:** [www.bakehousetheatre.com](http://www.bakehousetheatre.com) (or cash on the door subject to availability)