Fringe Review: The Umbrella Plays

Presented by **Wanderlust**
Reviewed 16 February 2016
There's no denying that the Adelaide Fringe attracts some great interstate and overseas talent, but let's not forget our locals.

Kelly Mildenhall has found some wonderfully talented local actors for her production of Cerise de Gelder's **The Umbrella Plays** – nine of them in fact (Adam Tuominen, James Sherwin, Matt Houston, Rosie Williams, Timisha Ward, David Salter, Joshua Coldwell, Maxim Bevan and Tamara Bennetts).
Some of these actors usually play lead roles but, in this delightful series of vignettes, Mildenhall has melded all nine into a wonderfully tight ensemble.

The Umbrella Plays is a collection of ten short sketches (skits almost) involving love, revenge, infidelity and friendship (all the good things in life): all featuring an umbrella (not always visible). The stories are all funny, with nice little twists and some moments of thoughtfulness.
While the individual stories are well written, it is this great cast of nine that make them work so well. Every actor captures their various characters – each actor has more than one role to play, and all play them hilariously. There are gender and age changes at the blink of an eye.

Every performance is a standout, but some real gems are: Tuominen's priggish Archibald; Bevan's prostitute; Coldwell's ex-con; Salter and Williams' extra-marital lovers; Houston's kiddie-wink; and all three of Bennetts characters.

Mildenhall brings out the comedy and moments of pathos well, using exaggeration of movement and gesture effectively. However, this reviewer found the maniacal laugh a bit too over the top, and the poetry segment needs the rhythm made clearer.

Support some great local talent and theatre this Fringe and don't leave **The Umbrella Plays** just for rainy days.
Reviewed by **Brian Godfrey**