



3/Director Joh Hartog (centre) with actors Clare Mansfield and Nic Krieg, on the set at the Bakehouse Theatre.

THERE is a pearler of a play in Adelaide at the moment and, while it may not be to everyone's taste, there are many good reasons to see it.

American playwright Neil LaBute's *Reasons to be Pretty* is like a theatrical king hit. It's not nice, it's not pretty, but it makes an impact.

LaBute is helped enormously in this production by Joh Hartog's deft direction, and outstanding performances by the talented cast members, Clare Mansfield, Nic Krieg, Krystal Brock and David Hirst.

It is a true ensemble effort, so much so that many of the laughs derived from really difficult material is due to their rapport.

Carly (Brock) overhears a work colleague Greg (Krieg) tell her husband Kent (Hirst) that if Greg were to rate his girlfriend Steph (Mansfield) in the looks department, he would call her regular.

Carly tells Steph. All hell breaks loose.

Reasons to Be Pretty looks at some of the less appealing aspects of male-female relationships, including self-defeating behaviours that cause havoc on both sides of the gender divide.

The writing is sharp and insightful, packed with insults and foul language, and cringe-making macho bravado in the character of Kent, a really nasty piece of work.

If we imagine Steph has known men like him, we might allow her some slack in her kneejerk reaction to Greg, who doesn't deserve the treatment she serves up.

Who are the victims here? LaBute leaves it to the audience to debate this conundrum after the lights go down.

Reasons to be Pretty

Bakehouse Theatre

Until June 27