

Between Two Waves a play that asks questions about the future

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Matt Crook, right, with James Edwards, plays a troubled climate scientist in Ian Meadows's topical *Between Two Waves*. Picture: Olivia Zanchetti Source: Supplied

“YOU get to the gate and realise you are back where you started, or something.” In a scrunched-up precis of the last lines of TS Eliot’s *Little Gidding*, Daniel, the central character of *Between Two Waves*, describes an exploration, and a crisis, that takes him, and the audience for Ian Meadows’s bold and imaginative play, full circle.

First performed in 2012 by Griffin Theatre and ably revived by director Corey McMahon as part of State Theatre Company’s Umbrella program, *Between Two Waves* asks questions about the future and what it may hold.

For Daniel, a young climatologist, invited to write government policy on climate change, it is a disturbing challenge to him as a scientist. And when he

meets and falls in love with the free-spirited Fiona, he is also forced to reflect on the implications of parenthood in an uncertain world.

Crisply directed by McMahon, this production is well-suited to the intimate confines of the Bakehouse. Olivia Zanchetta's thrifty design features a box stage with a skylight and slatted windows, serving scenes in Daniel's apartment and office. The lighting by Nic Mollison is probing and, at times, exhilaratingly warm; and Jason Sweeney's sound design subtly underscores shifts in mood.

The performances are excellent. As Daniel, a role originally played by the playwright in the Griffin production, Matt Crook is at his versatile best, uncovering complexities and hidden personal griefs as the boyishly nerdy scientist becomes increasingly weighed down by his intellectual responsibilities. Ellen Steele's lively Fiona is an unlikely match for the tightly wound Daniel, but Meadows's portrait of a developing (and unravelling) not-quite-30-something relationship is fresh and, judging by the young first-night audience's response, perceptively drawn. Fiona's mix of confidence and vulnerability is a familiar one, but Steele brings interesting and touchingly believable inflections to the character.

As Grenelle, the insurance assessor, Elena Carapetis spars well with Daniel's initial peevishness and her performance develops as the scientist's state of mind deteriorates. As Jimmy, Daniel's supervisor, James Edwards provides a valuable contrast in temperament important to the play's concerns.

In a year when Adelaide's second-tier companies have been relatively quiet, this fine production is a welcome arrival. *Between Two Waves* is a new Australian play well deserving of another staging and its themes have become even more topical since it was written.

In its depiction of an ethically and emotionally burdened scientist whose warnings go unheeded, another Eliot quote comes to mind: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?"

Tickets: \$20-\$30. Bookings: 131 246 or online. Duration: 140 minutes. Until October 25.