

Biography: A Game – *Stage Whispers* review



By Max Frisch. Bakehouse Theatre (S.A.). Aug 4-20th, 2016.

Swiss dramatist Max Frisch first published *Biography: A Game* in 1967 and by 1984 an English version was born. The play explores relationships and the decisions that define our lives.

For the first twenty minutes the script offers up no answers, but plenty of questions. What if we were given the chance to go back and rewrite passages of our lives? Many scenarios are tested throughout this

play with surprising consequences.

Set designer and director Joh Hartog has set his performing space on a checkerboard. This doubles perfectly as the protagonist's bachelor pad. Lighting design by Stephen Dean adds atmosphere and individual spots create drama when needed.



We are led through the life of Hannes Kurmann, played with emotional depth by Tim Lucas. Kurmann is determined to rid his life of his wife of seven years, Antoinette Stein. With the help of the director (Adam Carter), Kurmann is reminded of choices he has made in the past that perhaps led him to his first meeting with his wife. Carter plays the director with confidence and patience and is pivotal in setting the pace for the performance. Krystal Brock is carefree and comfortable in her portrayal of Kurmann's wife and makes a wonderful foil to her uptight husband.

The story's narrative focuses on the frustration of Kurmann and his determination to rid himself of guilt brought on by poor choices. He is convinced that if he goes back far enough into his past, he can rewrite his story. What becomes evident is that although he is in control of his responses, he cannot control the responses of others. Patterns form throughout, highlighting the character of Kurmann and his

destiny.

Hartog has cast this production well with a strong ensemble bringing many characters. It was important that actors were sure of their lines as they mirrored scenes with only slight changes to dialogue. Clearly well-rehearsed, they handled the word load beautifully.

A complex tale, with a common theme left the audience with a recurring question... if we had the power to change the course of our lives, would we or should we?

Kerry Cooper

Photographer: Michael Errey.