

Frankie & Johnny's Dangerous Dance in the Moonlight

Terrence McNally's play *Frankie & Johnny in the Clare de Lune* was written at the height of community panic about HIV/AIDS, where sex became a life-and-death matter.

Playwright Terrence McNally's *Frankie & Johnny in the Clare de Lune* is one of the most honest evocations of the innate desire for love that's been put to paper.

It's ostensibly about a one-night stand between a couple of jobbing hospitality types who both work in a mid-town New York diner. But there's a sting in its tail.

The STARC Productions team of Tony Knight (director), Marc Clement and Stefanie Rossi are an ideal trio to bring this piece to full flourish



Marc Clement and Stefanie Rossi in *Frankie & Johnny in the Clare de Lune*. Picture: STARC Productions

The three have a high degree of comfort and security with each other that makes for bravery in the performances. And so Rossi and Clement hurl themselves with gusto into the furious physicality of Frankie and Johnny's relationship, lust and love alike.

They also chart a careful path through the danger spots, particularly the possibility of reducing it to an opportunistic encounter, or even a simply love story.

For the subtext of *Frankie & Johnny in the Clare de Lune* is that it was written in 1987, at the height of community panic about HIV/AIDS, where sex became a life-and-death matter, and the very act that had the potential to create life might perversely result in taking it away.

Frankie and Johnny chose to take a risk. When they stand entwined at the window, looking out across the city to the strains of Debussy's *Clare de Lune* – moonlight – you're glad they did.

Peter Burdon

Frankie & Johnny in the Clare de Lune – Advertiser Review

Bakehouse Theatre - October 10-19