

Theatre Review: Reasons to be Pretty – Glam Adelaide



Posted by [Rod Lewis](#) on Jun 15th, 2015



Clare Mansfield and Nic Krieg in "Reasons to be Pretty" (Photo by Michael Errey)

Presented by the Bakehouse Theatre Company
Reviewed 13 June 2015

When an offhand remark about his girlfriend's looks is met with a seemingly disproportionate response, we're thrown into Neil LaBute's pointed but comical obsession with vanity.

Reasons to be Pretty is the third instalment in LaBute's trilogy of plays about relationships, following on from **The Shape of Things** and **Fat Pig**. The latter was seen at the Bakehouse Theatre back in 2013.

We are introduced to three pathologically selfish people and the poor sod caught in the middle. Nic Krieg is nuanced and nice as Greg, who is faced with the death of his 4-year relationship after a throw-away line to his best mate is reported back to his partner. Obsessed with her own features and in being right, girlfriend Steph (Clare Mansfield) storms out, mortally wounded to be considered only "regular" looking.

At his workplace, Greg's best mate Kent (David Hirst) is the neighbourhood bully and Kent's pregnant wife Carly (Krystal Brock) is Steph's best friend. All three people in Greg's life are prettier outside than in and it's a credit to the actors that all quickly become ugly as their characters' personalities override any physical appeal.

More frustrating than the appalling behaviour of Greg's mates is Joh Hartog's snappy but repetitious direction. Characters make to leave the room but stop for more conversation, almost leave again only to pause once more... it's a pattern repeated throughout the play to the point of annoyance, spoiling an otherwise enjoyable, well-paced romp.

Hartog's set design, on the other hand, makes great use of the Bakehouse stage, dividing the action into three areas that allow the actors to move freely without impinging on the neighbouring sets.

Filled with colourful language and many surprising behaviour problems, LaBute's script stimulates laughter even when we're cringing. On the surface, it's a coarse, nasty snapshot of human behaviour but not far beneath the surface is a well-realised statement that, even with atonement, it's the good guys that reap the happiness.

Venue: Bakehouse Theatre, 255 Angas Street, Adelaide

Season: 11 – 27 June 2015

Duration: 90 minutes (plus interval)

Tickets: \$15 – \$28

Bookings: Tickets available online through the [Bakehouse Theatre website](#) or at the door if not sold out.