

LINES

[Theatre Republic](#)

[Bakehouse Theatre](#)

Until 10 Nov 2018

Review by [Jamie Wright](#)

Please forgive this brief editorial prelude, but given that Adelaide is a city whose ranks of professional theatre companies has dwindled alarmingly in recent years, it is both heartening and exciting to be able to herald the arrival of a new company upon the scene.

Theatre Republic's debut production is "Lines", by playwright Pamela Carter. It tells the story of four army recruits undergoing intense basic training and claustrophobic barracks life, and the relationships that form between them.

Plotwise, there is not a lot here that hasn't been explored before – though Carter's script does cleverly subvert a few of the expected boot camp tropes – so it's more about the characters and the questions their actions and attitudes prompt. How does the concept of the military and its ages-old traditions and methods cope with rapidly-changing societal ideals? In order to send these young people halfway across the world to survive in combat we're essentially programming them to subvert their humanity – and, in many ways, deny the humanity of those they oppose. And who are the people in the today's army? They aren't society's elites.

Director Corey McMahon has assembled an excellent cast and used them to give this complex and often hard-to-follow (particularly in the final scene) piece a great energy, but not at the cost of losing the subtlety of the underlying statements.

All four actors – Matt Crooke, Rashidi Edward, Stuart Fong and James Smith – are excellent, bringing depth and distinctive characterisations to their performances.

Olivia Zanchetta's set is simple but effective, particularly in the small space that is the Bakehouse Stage; lighting (Chris Petridis) and sound (James Osborn) help provide impact throughout, particularly in the training montage scenes.

A sharp contrast to what we're often presented as the glory of military service, "Lines" is an excellent production – may it be the first of many from Theatre Republic.