

## **SMALL GODS**

[Unseen Theatre Company](#)

[Bakehouse Theatre](#)

Until 30 May 2015

Review for Adelaide Theatre Guide by [Louise Miller-Frost](#)

*When God manifested on earth ... as a small tortoise.*

Fans of the late Sir Terry Pratchett will be thrilled to know that Unseen Theatre Company has done justice to his satirical novel, "Small Gods", adapted for stage by Pamela Munt, who is also directing this performance.

Set in Discworld, the God Om (Alycia Rabig) is desperately seeking believers to increase her power and resolve her quandary. She has accidentally manifested as a small tortoise and is now stuck – and in danger of being eaten. Unfortunately, the only person who can hear her is an earnest novice called Brutha, played by Timothy Tedmanson in a strong and empathetic performance. Convinced he is hearing voices, Brutha is consequently doubted, dismissed and punished.

As the only person actually hearing the genuine voice of Om, Brutha is an observer and reluctant participant in the machinations of the church hierarchy as they cynically jockey for position and power. Alycia Rabig does an excellent portrayal of the impotent and self-absorbed Om, increasingly isolated from anything to do with holy practices and seemingly amused by the false holy documents produced in her name.

Adeodatus McCormack is the evil Deacon Vorbis, and his cynicism and the pleasure he derives from casual cruelty adequately display how an evil leader is able to rout an ostensibly good organisation. Aided and abetted by Tony Power as the compliant Brother Nhumrod, head of the novices, Deacon Vorbis defeats the ironically named Tyrant (Sally Peck). His subsequent period lost in the desert shows the power of controlling the story – whether true or false - in the manipulation of the hearts and minds of humankind.

The wit and satire in this adaptation and in the original novel make what could have been a heavy story into an entertaining evening. The sparse set and props worked well with set changes occurring smoothly as the action continued on-stage. Costuming is effective and with the exception of a period at the beginning when harsh overhead lighting indicating a narrative section made it quite difficult for the audience to watch, this was a masterful performance.

I was going to start this review by saying that those who are religious may find this story challenging, but apparently Sir Terry received fan mail from believers and unbelievers alike, both stating that it supported their position. So, *caveat emptor*.