

## Perplex



By Marius von Mayenburg. Joh Hartog Productions. Bakehouse Theatre, Adelaide. 15th-25th August, 2018.

*Perplex* may well prove to be a show that lives up to its title for most audiences, but director Joh Hartog has come up trumps with this outstanding production: a funny, heady, potent blend of the surreal with the absurd, set within the confines of a seemingly ordinary middle-class dwelling that actually intensifies the strangeness of what

transpires there...

Four performers – Lisa Harper Campbell, David Hirst, Clare Mansfield and Eddie Morrison – sustain a rather remarkable ensemble effort throughout the non-stop 100 minutes of *Perplex*. They may present themselves to us with their own names attached, but it's not long before identity in this particular environment proves itself to be a notably fluid construct. Equally capable of slipping and changing are the characters' relations with – and feelings toward – each other.

There are all manner of possibilities to get pleasurably lost in here, and a great number of themes to chew on. Happily, lots of laughs are also served up for our enjoyment. Crucial contributions are provided by Tammy Boden's memorable set and costume design, Stephen Dean's lighting and sound are subtly effective, while Lauren Taylor has an unexpected contribution to make in her role as stage manager towards the end of proceedings...

It is rare indeed to encounter a show that intrigues, challenges, stimulates, and entertains, all in one lively, well-paced package. *Perplex* covers all these bases (and probably more), meaning that this is the Adelaide show to put at the top of your must-see list.

*Anthony Vawser – Stage Whispers*