

## **THE AUDITION**

**Bakehouse Theatre Company**  
**Bakehouse Theatre**

Until 03 Oct 2015



Review by [Anthony Vawser](#)

A gripping experience with a number of interesting ideas thrown around inside its tight two-act 90-minute run time, "The Audition", an Australian premiere from UK playwright James Johnson, seems to draw its inspiration from the meaty-yet-mysterious psychological themes favoured by such masters as Harold Pinter and Ingmar Bergman, without ever quite reaching their elite level of achievement. Is it worth seeing? Most definitely.

The show's title is a literal description of its setting, except that this is by no means your average audition. Krystal Brock is Stella, the director whose tactics are confrontational enough to – at first – appall Clare Mansfield's aspiring candidate Lauren, but then this initial power dynamic starts to go beyond the unorthodox and unhealthy, appearing to morph and mutate into something almost monstrous, as Lauren becomes seemingly determined to play Stella's increasingly reckless games all the way to the end...

Johnson's script is something of a balancing act between themes and characterisation, with the human figures sometimes less distinct than the issues that they bring to the table. His writing pushes the scenario to the outer limits of credibility, but on the whole, "The Audition" succeeds both as a thought-provoking inquisition into the potential extremes of the creative/artistic personality, and as a metaphorical series of mind games in which the nature of reality – and identity – has the rug repeatedly pulled out from under it.

The two performers bring impressive energy and commitment to their roles (acknowledgment due also to Zoë Dibb's brief-but-crucial contribution), and Joh Hartog directs at a generally breathless pace. Musical inclusions are mostly brief and pleasantly jazzy, but one particular rock piece that accompanies a crucial climactic scene is a rather unnecessary distraction.

"The Audition" presents a psychological (and physical) battle of wills that leaves its audience wondering whether a professional performer can ever have control of their own destiny, or whether they must always submit to being 'puppeteered'...The Bakehouse Theatre Company have brought another provocative and intriguing piece of electric theatre to Adelaide.