

The Forgettory



Tracey Crisp. Bakehouse Theatre. 25 Oct 2019

"The paradox of the universal being entirely personal", writes director Maggie Wood in the program notes for Tracey Crisp's *The Forgettory*; succinctly, those words sum up this charmer of a one-hander.

Tracey Crisp's sobriquet is "the vegetarian librarian". She is a performer known for her stories of gentle self-deprecation. She's whimsical, witty, perceptive, and erudite and she has a glorious way with words.

This little show finds its audience among older women for whom love and grief and loss of memory are heartland issues.

The little Studio Theatre at the Bakehouse is transformed into a snug librarian's nest for the show. There is an oversized bookcase with oversized books, a cosy carpet, a comfy chair, a cardboard box, and some very sympathetic and well-wrought lighting.

Crisp introduces her contemporary world, a 44th floor apartment in scorching, impersonal Abu Dhabi where she has to have her husband's sanction to get a permit to have wine, the wine which gives her sanity and time to reflect in this insomniac other life so far from where her most poignant memories have been made.

She takes the audience on a gentle tour of family and memories, most movingly in the last section when she sits and knits in the chair, talking at the bedside of her failing father. And she brings old sharp memory to meet new fragmented memory; an impasse; a ubiquitous generational tragedy.

Director Maggie Wood has generated an astute sense of place and time in this production, simply by having Crisp stand or sit or move one step here and one step there. It's artful, subtle, and effective.

And the audience sits silently rapt in someone else's stories which, in so many ways, are also their own. Birth, sleeplessness, grief, dementia. And, as Crisp delivers her beautifully-crafted tales, speaking clearly, calmly and without casual abbreviation, they may be shedding an empathetic tear or two.

Samela Harris – Barefoot Review

When: 23 to 26 Oct

Where: Bakehouse Theatre

Bookings: bakehousetheatre.com