

Adelaide Fringe review 2014: Miles Away

Miles Away

Theatre **1/2

Bakehouse Theatre, until February 22

Originally conceived as part of a 30-minute play program, Miles Away has been expanded by Blue Dingo Productions writer-director John Doherty into what is effectively an hour-long showcase for the talents of actor Renee Gentle, from edgy young Adelaide theatre company Junglebean.

On a spontaneous journey of self-discovery riding her bicycle through the Outback, a young woman called Alex variously encounters or remembers more than a dozen other characters, from family members to complete strangers.

Gentle jumps from her stationary tredley, which sits sandwiched against a dusty backdrop on a red dirt road, to inhabit the skins of a series of broad caricatures and familiar stereotypes, from a nagging mother and long-suffering father to a goofy country publican, an Italian bicycle salesman and an old barfly.

While her versatility is to be admired, Gentle conjures each creation with so many wild hand gestures that you could be forgiven for thinking the entire show is being performed in Auslan.

En-route we learn of the two reasons why Alex is really running away, but the experience which sets her on the path back home is hardly revelatory. Accompanied by a tinkling live soundtrack by Ting Yun, it's a bit like watching an episode of Here's Humphrey or Play School, where someone pretends to ride a bike and meets all the people in their neighbourhood.

Patrick McDonald