

THE WEB

Bakehouse Theatre Company

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Until 02 Nov 2013



Review by [Brian Godfrey](#)

In this day and age, we probably communicate and socialise electronically more than verbally – just sit on a train, bus or tram for about five minutes and see how many phones, iPods, etc. are used.

Kate Mulvany's psychological thriller "The Web" deals with manipulation; and in particular, the way electronic social media such as emails, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace etc. can be used as weapons to control someone. Her story, set in a small rural Australian community, the ideal place for rumours to run rife, is simple: loner Fred (Michael Lemmer), still recovering from his father's suicide is befriended by Head Prefect, Travis (Andrew Thomas), who offers assistance with the boy's Social Studies project. However, Mulvany peppers her script with dark town secrets, girls mysteriously disappearing, social experiments and control. The dénouement seems a little too clean and contrived, but hides a very good sting in its tail.

While Mulvaney's script is excellent, it is Yasmin Gurreeboo's direction that makes this production immensely riveting and intriguing. Her blocking and moving of the show is quirky and wonderfully unusual; and her idea of turning the actors into her 'puppets' and manipulating them (especially in scene changes) is sheer genius.

This all works so well with Manda Webber's rural set, including a police interrogation area and a hospital room presented as boxes that entrap the characters. Alexander Ramsay's mix of rural and clinical lighting effects add volumes to an already fairly complete production.

Using 'Tara's Theme' from "Gone With The Wind" seemed a strange choice of music, until one realises that Scarlett O'Hara was perhaps one of literature and film's greatest manipulators.

Actors Michael Lemmer and Andrew Thomas prove once more that young professional talent in Adelaide is ever on the rise – they are perfect for their roles and both give very strong, captivating performances: Lemmer never loses the audience's sympathy, whilst Thomas seems to be the logical choice for Head Boy, using his beguiling smile to great effect.

Amy Victoria Brooks is absolutely wonderful as Fred's very, very country mother – she is hilarious, whilst managing to portray a believable maternal angst for her son when required; Nathan Porteus is just right as the town police officer slightly out of his depth, giving a nicely balanced performance; with Delia Taylor rounding out the strong cast as a bubbly cyber-girlfriend.

The Bakehouse Theatre Company has once again given Adelaide top grade theatre and certainly deserves a far bigger audience than the handful that was present on the night reviewed.