

A RIVETING JOURNEY THROUGH AN INSIGHTFUL, THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND SOMETIMES MOVING LABYRINTH OF HIGHLY VARIED HUMAN INTERACTIONS

LOVE AND INFORMATION

By Caryl Churchill

Directed by Peter Zazzali

TOI WHAKAARI DOUBLE BILL

at Te Whaea National Dance and Drama Centre, 11 Hutchison Rd, Newtown, Wellington

Until 20 Jun 2019

Reviewed by John Smythe, 10 Jun 2019

Since Caryl Churchill wrote *Love and Information* in 2012, the Information Super Highway has become a ubiquitous constant in most of our lives. In the seven years since, it has arguably become more intrusive, more convenient and more indispensable as a resource. We live in an age of constant connectivity and information overload.

Watching *Love and Information* – presented by Toi Whakaari as part of the 3rd year Acting Double Bill along with Eleanor Bishop's *Boys* – is like checking tweets, texts, Instagram, Facebook, Messenger and Emails while web-browsing, channel-hopping and eavesdropping – and maybe dipping into newspapers, magazines and books as well. In parallel or counterpoint, the play also looks at, and for, that elusive yet essential thing called love in its various forms. But while the above behaviour may suggest boredom and disinterest, *Love and Information* delivers the opposite.

Directed by Peter Zazzali, with mood-setting punctuation by cellist Olivia Wilding, actors Myer Van Gosliga, Rasmus Wessman, Lance Ainofo, Robert Johansson, Richard Crouchley, Eliis Uudekull, Eden Wallace, Lydia Bensky, Lucy Dawber and Dani Meldrum bring the 'brief candles' of 43 vignettes alive over 70 minutes.

Within constantly changing groupings they make every person, relationship and situation real, compelling us to believe in them. Everything is open to interpretation as we intuitively invent what's happened before and deduce what's driving each scene while connecting through recognition, empathy or curiosity.

The set, designed by Jacob Keenan, offers a white wall constructed from multiple white plastic dish racks and a range of small rostra easily reconfigured by the cast within the traverse acting space, lit by Jennifer Lal. The costumes, credited to Meredith Dooley and Jessica Taunt, and AV surtitles (Isaac Kirkwood), serve as instant prompts to our understandings and interpretations.

As I understand it the 100-odd characters are neither named nor gendered, and the scenes are grouped within seven sections and may be played in whatever order each production chooses.

From the two schoolgirls negotiating whether or not one will divulge a secret to the other, to the couple where she instantly answers all the quiz questions he pitches at her except one – “Do you love me?” – our journey through this insightful, thought-provoking and sometimes moving labyrinth of highly varied human interactions is riveting.

For more production details, click on the title above. Go to [Home](#) page to see other Reviews, recent Comments and Forum postings (under Chat Back), and News.