



Brook's Fragments of brilliance

Fragments

By Samuel Beckett
 Directed by Peter Brook
 Albany Town Hall

IF revenge is a dish best served cold, Samuel Beckett is definitely a playwright best enjoyed in fragments.

I've reached this conclusion only recently but I think it is an informed one after watching Samuel Beckett: Fragments.

Anyone who goes to see Beckett expecting a fabulous plot and a recognisable beginning, middle and end is going to be disappointed but it is true that Beckett, more than any other playwright, in the wrong hands can be disastrous.

Beckett's scripts not only need to be performed to be truly appreciated, they need to be performed brilliantly.

Thankfully for the packed Albany Town Hall crowd, this was the case.

An international and highly-accomplished cast brought to life the best parts of Beckett's theatre.

Humour, insight and intensity abounded in these presentations of Beckett.

The length of each segment was perfect for enjoyment of the playlets without the audience becoming restless and searching for a plot.

For those who believe Beckett's work is meaningless, Fragments provides the contradiction – each piece had a Hayley Carmichael put in a great performance as part of Samuel Beckett: Fragments' Australian premiere at the Albany Town Hall on Saturday night.

comment to make about human nature – one that rang true for me.

At one point a cripple asked a blind man: "Why don't you let yourself die?" to which he replied "I'm not unhappy enough."

Moments of dialogue like this are both funny and hauntingly perceptive and that is the key to Beckett's talent.

Each piece was also carefully woven together so that an intense, dialogue-driven offering was followed by a physical, slapstick routine, effectively staving off any audience fatigue.

Peter Brook is considered by many to be a genius and he showed his skill in putting together Fragments to exemplify the best of Beckett and give people an appreciation of what made him brilliant, rather than self-righteously expecting everyone to enjoy it without treating the ingredients with care.

The acting was professional, accomplished and managed to keep the energy up without going over the top.

Both males played their roles with comic intensity, while Hayley Carmichael deserves special praise for handling her wordy, repetitive monologues with style and real emotion.

As Albany was Fragments' Australian premiere I'm happy to spread the word that it would be an hour well spent for anyone who enjoys top, thought-provoking theatre.

Bridget Lacy

