



The following reviews are provided for publicity purposes for the Australian play, *Chasing Pegasus (a play in ten chords)*, written by Sally McLean - Copyright © Sally McLean 2003. All Rights Reserved.

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REVIEW SOUND BITES (SEE NEXT PAGES FOR FULL REVIEWS):

"... if you're in the mood for some dramatic theatre with interesting characters, inspiring stories and a feel-good, uplifting message, *Chasing Pegasus* provides an ultimately engaging hour of theatre." - *3RRR*

"... confronting, thought provoking and engaging .. an experience that shouldn't be missed" - *TheatreAlive*

"... an engaging, beautifully written and staged night of theatre that doesn't disappoint." - *Theatre Australia*

"Well-written and even, dare I say, inspirational, *Chasing Pegasus* deftly holds up a mirror to the audience, reflecting back our foibles and frailties without, thankfully, falling into cliché or over-sentimentality." - *TheatreTalk*

REVIEW:



Chasing Pegasus (a play in ten chords)

Luke Troynar, 3RRR

12 October 2006

Chasing Pegasus (a play in ten chords) is a performance which celebrates what makes us different and what ultimately makes us all the same. Divided into ten monologues, spawning from the ten characters who are all part of the Serendipity Book Club, each monologue lets us explore each member of the Book Club's own personal story, and lays bare all their fears, desires and dreams.

While the character's stories all reveal a range of very different tales, they all share one common theme - each character's determination to follow their dreams and become more than the sum of their parts.

The message of the play is a pleasant one as well as a clear one - no matter how much suffering there is in the world, there is always hope.

While the play features some strong performances from a cast containing many familiar faces from Australian television, some of the stars seem to shine a lot brighter than others, leaving the overall performance perhaps a little uneven.

The script is engaging, and at times insightful. Overall, if you're in the mood for some dramatic theatre with interesting characters, inspiring stories and a feel-good, uplifting message, *Chasing Pegasus* provides an ultimately engaging hour of theatre.

REVIEW:



Theatre that makes you think

Susan Michaels, *TheatreAlive*

(An Arts Victoria Initiative)

October 9, 2006

You know you've had a good night at the theatre when you walk out the door at the end of the show and realise you're seeing the world a little differently than before - and it's changed your perspective for the better. Strong words, but that's just how I feel after seeing *Chasing Pegasus - A Play in Ten Chords* tonight.

I didn't know what to expect when my house mate and I rolled up to the Gasworks box office to buy our tickets. As I'm a recent arrival to Melbourne (via Sydney and London), people had warned me that Melbourne Fringe Festival shows were usually bizarre at best. But, a friend had seen this show on Tuesday and couldn't stop talking about it, so we figured we'd go along to see what all the fuss was about. And I'm really glad we did.

I'm still processing the experience, but the strongest impression I have is how well-written the piece is. It's the sort of work you'd expect to see at one of the professional theatre companies - there are so many layers to what was going on both in the text and on the stage with the actors. It basically tells the stories of 10 people, brought together at a book club meeting. While the treatment is very standard theatre, it absorbed me from start to finish - I couldn't stop watching these people as they exposed their inner thoughts and feelings one by one.

The cast were all so good, it's impossible to pick a favourite. They all held their own with the work and the characters were all so very different. It was such a strong cast - really great performances with a lot of depth. It was confronting, thought provoking and engaging. And there were plenty of laughs as well. It was a great balance and I have gained a great respect for the writer/director, Sally McLean and the talented cast she has assembled. And the touch of having Ross Ryan perform his song *I Am Pegasus* at the end is a truly inspired move. It gave the finale of the play a real sense of closure and message. I was really impressed with the whole production.

I guess I wanted to write this review to say to others who might be wondering if they should see the show - do it. As someone who has seen a lot of theatre in various cities, I can tell you this play is an experience that shouldn't be missed.

REVIEW:



Chasing Pegasus - A Play In 10 Chords (VIC)

Marian Robson, Theatre Australia

(an initiative of the Independent Theatre Association)

October 20, 2006

As a director who has just commenced a year's sabbatical, I have begun making the effort to attend various fringe and independent theatre productions, being interested to see what the emerging generation of theatre practitioners are up to. Knowing that this Incognita are a new independent theatre company on the Mornington Peninsula (where I am currently staying with friends), I decided to see for myself what their debut production was like and so went along to see the show last night (Thursday) to see if the production lived up to its rather overt publicity campaign.

"Chasing Pegasus - a play in 10 chords" is a journey through a myriad of examples of the human condition, neatly tied up in the innocent-looking package of a weekly Book Club meeting.

Ten people are meeting at the Serendipity Book Shop to discuss the bestseller "Chasing Pegasus". The various characters include a deaf girl, a housewife, a paraplegic, two teenagers, the book shop owner and her assistant, a high school teacher, an ex-singer and the celebrated author whose work they're there to discuss.

The play begins in the usual way - and is actually quite amusing, which gives the false impression that we're about to enjoy a fairly standard night of theatre in the comedy/drama vein.

But that quickly changes as the deaf girl suddenly breaks into monologue - she begins it as if it's part of the dialogue, and actually got a laugh with her first line, but then we begin to realise that this is but one of the many clever directorial touches that make this play so unique and so enjoyable.

Somehow the characters manage to begin their monologues without us realising that they are. This is a great staging technique as it keeps the play flowing from dialogue to monologue - there is no indication that the individual characters are about to speak to the audience - "breaking the fourth wall" - they just suddenly start to speak to us and we're hooked from their first sentence.

(cont/...)

A neat parallel is therefore drawn between how these characters show one face to the world and then show their true face to us, the audience. The result is a highly engaging and, at times, confronting, night of theatre that makes a strong statement about what it is to be human.

The cast were all strong performers, playing their well-drawn characters with truth and believability, but the standouts were Charity Shaw ("Abby") - who spoke, signed and lip-read so convincingly, I was surprised to discover that she wasn't actually deaf, Sarah Penn ("Imelda") who found just the right emotional balance required to tell a tragic story under the influence of prescribed drugs - a tough call for any performer - and yet remained delightfully vague throughout all the dialogue sequences, Peter Flaherty ("Andrew") who played the paraplegic character with great larrikinism and cheerfulness, yet let us see the more vulnerable side of this condition towards the end of his monologue, which truly broke your heart and Sally McLean ("Katherine") who drew an aching beautiful and entirely convincing portrait of a woman in crisis and conflict, caught between her love for and abject fear of a brutal husband.

Another standout was Jennifer Hansen (previously known to audiences as Newsreader for Channel 10), who played the author "Franklin" with great grace, strength and passion. Her final monologue was delivered with such truth and conviction that I wanted to stand and cheer at the end.

The extremely well-written script was ably backed by excellent lighting and sound and the set and props were well designed and utilised with great attention to detail. Mt Martha House is ideally suited to this production - creating an intimate theatre space with great atmosphere - which made you feel like you were actually part of the action and pulled you into the stories being told.

Written and directed by Sally McLean, "Chasing Pegasus - a play in 10 chords" is an engaging, beautifully written and staged night of theatre that doesn't disappoint. It is well worth the (very reasonable) ticket price and the cast and production team should be very proud of their work. The production I saw last evening would very ably hold it's own on any of our professional stages and I look forward to seeing more from this innovative young company.

REVIEW (of script from 2005):

Chasing Pegasus (a play in ten chords)

by Sally McLean

Tara Wilkins, Theatre Talk

Chasing Pegasus (a play in ten chords) is a 'slice of life' insight into what makes us as human beings tick.

While fairly mainstream as far as the idea is concerned - a group of people are gathering for their weekly book club meeting at the Serendipity Book Shop, so providing a chance to look at human nature under a controlled microscope - there are clever touches, such as when each character suddenly breaks into a monologue, sometimes out of the blue, which gives a sense of witnessing their inner thoughts - like we've stepped into each character's head for a moment. This isn't always a comfortable sensation, sometimes feeling like a gross invasion of privacy, but works very well within the play's structure, as each character is written with sensitivity and honesty, so making this device a fascinating insight into how each of us, although very different in personality, under it all are really very much the same.

Well-written and even, dare I say, inspirational, Chasing Pegasus deftly holds up a mirror to the audience, reflecting back our foibles and frailties without, thankfully, falling into cliché or over-sentimentality.