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The Insomnia Project, La Mama Courthouse

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In this 24/7 crazy world we live in, it is estimated that 1 in 3 Australians live with some kind of sleep deprivation, as we become more and more a “sleep-sick” society. The Insomnia Project is the therapeutic brain-child of composer and director Natasha Moszenin’s own experiences, having lived with Insomnia herself since she was a teenager.

The production plunges the audience into the world of the sleepless nights of our four protagonists, as they attempt to deal with the blurred lines between sleep and waking. A powerful mix of song, spoken word and atmospheric music take us deeper into their world as their delusional states and desperation begin to take control.



There are some truly inspired moments, throughout the play. Moving from simple restlessness through despair into sleeping-pill drug fuelled chaos is told through a series of songs, eerie atmospheric settings and spoken word. A particularly moving piece sees one of the individuals recount her care at not waking her family as she creeps around the house, slowly turning into anger at their ability to sleep while she herself cannot.

A series of spoken word round table recounting of prescription medication and their side effects gives way to desperately resorting to taking them anyway. The circular dialogue growing in volume and urgency as the four individuals suffer the side effects and grow worse really does provide one of the strongest moments of the night. We even see the frustration of beginning to dose off, only to be woken by an errant call to our mobile, something I think we can all relate to.

At 80 minutes duration though, there was an overwhelming sense of it being a good 20 minutes or so too long. What had so much potential to be a breathtakingly intense journey into the human psyche ends up dragging at times. The opening moments in particular do not seem to add much and while very artistically written, the sheer amount of rolling around on the floor and stumbling around early on seems to be misplaced and detracts from the overall progression you would feel if this was left until later in the story arch.



The songs themselves are heartfelt, moving and very well written, performed live on piano which is a nice touch. Other parts seem to add little to those uninitiated in the performing arts, with the vast amounts of “artistic motion” akin to rolling around on the floor for 5 minutes at a time, doing little to make this an appealing prospect for the lay public. There were certainly people in the crowd who did appreciate this artistic nature, I just question if it necessarily appeals to a wider audience.

At times powerful, other times confusing, this delivers a look through the human mind, a journey through the breakdown of the mind through sleep deprivation. It may be hard to follow at times and a little over-acted in places, finding more common ground across the audience when characters begin just talking and expressing themselves, but those who appreciate a well written thought provoking artistic piece will find plenty to appreciate.

The Insomnia Project is running at the La Mama Courthouse Theatre through until the 9th of August. Check out their website for more details and to buy tickets: [La Mama Courthouse](#).

Thanks you to Lynda Buckley and Encore PR for the tickets.

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