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THEATRE REVIEWS

10.05.17

'The Becoming' by Katie Pollock - Old Fitz Theatre

review & interview by Joy Minter

The Becoming is a thought-provoking black comedy about transformation and how people decide to change their fate, and the fate of others around them. Very topical and also very funny, the play opens up a dialogue about coping with a 'new normal' - when old normal is fast becoming a thing of the past.

Greta Samsa gets up early after a night of troubling dreams determined to turn over a new leaf, and proceeds by making her family breakfast. Her efforts to feed them are thwarted by a family hell-bent on their own missions: a golfing father and busy working mother and unusually reticent brother, whose failure to appear for breakfast causes much consternation.



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Six of the Best: Japanese

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Patricia Pemberton plays Greta with verve, she is refreshingly warm without becoming cloying, as she attempts to help her brother (Adam Solis), who has a Zen-like calm and has chosen a new path of his own. Mark Langham and Lucy Miller added to the farcical story each with their own amusing take on the distracted parents, they also did double-duty as police who haven't noticed a glaring breach in the proceedings.

This play raises many questions: should our lives be lived in solitude or can we help others? Is human existence ultimately insignificant? You will have to see the show to make up your own mind, in the meantime, writer Katie Pollock spoke about the production and the play's message.

Joy - What was the turning point for you to decide to write **The Becoming**, or was it a gradual thing?

Katie - I'd thought about doing a riff on Kafka for quite a while but when I got the idea for **The Becoming** it arrived quite fully formed. I never really know where these things come from or why they come at a certain time but having the New Fitz deadline certainly helped!

Joy - The play got big laughs in the beginning, but when the play took a darker and unexpected turn, the laughs were a bit light on the ground, are we ready for a satire like this?

Katie - The thing with satire is it's a knowing, cynical exercise, that uses humour and ridicule to criticize other people's stupidity. This isn't satire. Absurdism, on the other hand, recognizes that we live in a chaotic, random and possibly entirely pointless universe. If we can entertain the idea that the world may not be the benign and rational place we'd prefer it to be, then we can start looking at our place within it, and what each of us can do to get through the chaos. I think we're ready to do that.

Joy - Greta's new path ultimately goes awry, would the outcome have been different if she had stayed a normal self-absorbed teen?

Katie - Does it though? She chooses to stand up



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for something she believes in. I'd say that's a pretty good outcome.

Joy - Michael Abercromby has assembled an impressive cast and there are some great performances, would you have done anything differently? Have you ever been tempted to try directing?

Katie - I've loved working with Michael and the cast on this show - they've been absolutely fantastic, super professional, and very funny. I wouldn't change a thing. As for directing, I have done it before (and would never say never) but I love getting the different perspective that a smart director brings to the room. The work is always bigger and better than just what's inside my head.

Joy - What is next for you?

Katie - I have a million applications in for a million different things. If they all come through I'm going to be working my arse off ... which would be way better than the alternative.

Thanks so much to Katie for chatting about her play, **The Becoming** is on at the Old Fitz Theatre until 14 October, for more information and tickets see: <https://www.redlineproductions.com.au/the-becoming>

Featuring: Mark Langham, Lucy Miller, Patricia Pemberton and Adam Solis.

Creative Team: Katie Pollock (writer), Michael Abercromby (director).



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