

## THEATRE REVIEW: *Apocalypse Perth* (Silver ArtRage Festival)

By [Lisette Kaleveld](#) Arts Hub

Monday, October 27, 2008

- [Print this page](#)

For one hour of theatre, *Apocalypse Perth* has a lot going for it. Vitality, humour and a fast-paced, thought-provoking script are all elements of its success. But the very idea behind the play is fresh and fascinating.

In January 2008 a Perth-based amateur theatre group performed *Rock Apocalypse*. The online forum that followed allowed for audience response, which all seemed nice (participatory, interactive, in the interests of open dialogue etc) ... until a flood of derogatory comments overwhelmed the forum, in turn, destroying the confidence of the cast and crew.

*Apocalypse Perth* re-enacts the online debate verbatim, while also incorporating responses from the victimised performers.

Playwright Katie Rice should be commended for turning the often drab, insular world of online forums into something vibrant and palatable to a wider audience. The script brings the comments of the posters alive.

The diversity of voices proceeds with an upbeat and engaging rhythm, while also subtly prompting us to think broadly about communication and new technologies. A clever contrast is drawn between the cowardice of the internet troll/anonymous poster, and the courage and risk it takes to perform live.

Each of the four actors, Vanessa Trengove, Whitney Richards, Greg McNeill, Craig Williams and especially Whitney Richards, who plays Kelly and wins our unconditional empathy, prove capable of mastering a variety of characters and moods, while inspiring outrage and sympathy in all the right places.

In my role as a reviewer, I have to admit to the disarming effect of this play. It's hard not to emerge from the show with heightened awareness of the power and permanency of the written word, which, in this Information Age, is something we should all reflect on.

Do the opinions of a handful of people gain too much weight when published (and searchable)?

After all, it's easy for anyone to broadcast their thoughts and views on the Internet. But what's not easy is the energy, commitment and courage it takes to put a live performance together.

Whatever your thoughts on the issue, this time at least it's the artists of *Rock Apocalypse* who seem to get the last word. In fact, their right of reply is brazenly broadcast across this play's program cover – 'Shame. Shame on you all. We asked for a review, not a subscription to S\*\*t-slinging Weekly'.

A good point, and well taken.

*Apocalypse Perth*, part of the Silver Artrage Festival, is a joint Blue Room and Always Working Artists production, showing at the Blue Room Studio until 8 November 2008.

***Apocalypse Perth***

**Full \$22 / Conc. \$15**

**Blue Room Members: Full \$18 / Conc. \$12**

**The Blue Room Studio, 53 James Street Northbridge Perth WA**

**22 October to 8 November**