***Disclosed* Exposes Timeless Issues**

**Theatre Review**

By Nick Tarantino

Australia’s convicts are now recognised as an important contributing factor to the pioneering spirit that built our great nation. However, while the majority of convicts went on to lead productive lives, there’s no denying the horror that also was also a part of dealing with a huge influx of felons.

During our penal history, just like today, there were continuing experiments on how best to “rehabilitate criminals”. One such innovation was the Separate Prison at Port Arthur where convicts were placed in individual cells and forbidden to speak. Seen as a more humane treatment than physical punishment, the system was fiercely championed by Commandant Boyd, despite proving to be a failure in England. Of course, we know today that covert abuse can be just as severe or worse than physical abuse.

It is interesting then that Caitlin Richardson’s *Disclosed* conjures an almost gentle and dreamlike atmosphere within the prison setup.

That’s not to say that the play doesn’t evoke the brutality of the situation but by intermingling music, myth and eloquent convicts, the play often crosses from the temporal to the ethereal plane. Told in three short stories, the play uses true episodes as a basis to explore the effect of isolation, especially on the mind.

Director Peter Hammond clearly understands the complexity of such an explorationand keeps the focus on performance.

While the stories could have gained from greater texturing, performance are generally solid in all the stories. *The Clock Stopped* tale is the strongest with Kieran Phillips, Antonio Zanchetta and Leigh Oswin drawing us into and out of a surreal world with their fine portrayals.

Traditional singer Danny Spooner, like Eric Bogle, embodies the Australian voice born of the old country asd, as such, his singing fits well as a bridging device between the convict stories./

The set, while functional, is slightly distracting and the soundscape almost seems unnecessary.

Congratulations to *Three River Theatre* for producing another original Tasmanian play.

Richardson’s play, well-grounded in history, promotes deeper thinking and discussion – particularly as the issues it exposes are as relevant today as they were in our penal beginnings.

*Disclosed* can be seen at the Earl Arts Centre on Saturday at 4pm and 8pm and Sunday at 2pm.