

# Unique exploratory play shows director's power

## REVIEW

**What:** Love and Information

**Who:** Carving In Ice Theatre

**When:** November 8-16

**Where:** The Playhouse: Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts

**Playwright:** Caryl Churchill

**Director:** Gaye Poole

**Reviewer:** Sam Edwards

Fifty six-plus scenes, more than 100 characters, and not a continuous narrative in sight.

Oh, each scene is narrative, portraying the very essence of moments in which humans try to communicate, but the mini-stories have neither a beginning nor an end except through the sensitively designed lighting from creative lighting designer Aaron Chesham.

The lighting, incidentally, is a perfect complement for director Poole's functionally minimalist, but productively active sets. Disconcertingly, scenes are connected by travelling musak, a percussive faux melodic rollover theme, which, as the evening progressed, became intrusive.

What the mini-stories offer, however, is a perceptive insight into contemporary

urban society, into ways characters reflecting members of the responsive audience behave with each other, so often talking, as Joan Metge suggested, "past each other".

They deliver information no one comprehends, they speak in tongues of cliché and cultural identity rather than meaning, and they handle emotion in words which are recognised but undefinable.

In one hilarious scene, played with remarkable potential by Vivi Crossland as a small girl who cannot feel physical pain, she asks to have pain explained.

Try it, oh reader. Describing pain, or feelings generally, in words, is indescribably difficult. Human disconnection is pinpointed in conversation between a woman in love and a man who has fallen in love with a computer avatar, and, ironically, cannot see the reality. Scenes are filled with poetic ambiguities which trigger intensely personal response.

This is only the second production of Churchill's play after its enormously successful UK premiere a year ago, and director Poole's fascinating interpretation is as much a recognition of her growing power as a producer of first rate dramatic experiences as it is of the uniquely exploratory play itself.



**Multiple personalities:** Mihailo Ladjevac and Amanda Wallace are two of the 18 actors playing more than 100 characters in *Love and Information*. Photo supplied.