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**ASYLUM**

**ARTS 3rd Year Acting Students**  
**Parks Community Centre**  
Until April 9

Review by Simon Slade

Combining the two tales of Daniel Payl Schreber, President of the Court of Appeals in 1890s Dresden and K., an asylum seeker in present-day Australia are excellent subjects for a new piece of theatre.

To draw parallels between Schreber's journey into madness, committal to an institution and his eventual release and K's journey across borders, committal to Woomera and his eventual release is an interesting idea, yet not without its pitfalls.

However, to really muddy the waters, there are two additional subplots woven in. These two stories are less relevant to the themes of the other two works, almost to the extent that they could have formed the basis for a different work altogether.

The eventual effect of this is to confuse and detract from a more thorough examination of each of the primary stories.

Daniel Paul Schreber's "Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken" seems to be the basis for much of the material about his life, but it does not deal with any of the reasons for his condition, for example the way some of Schreber's delusions are at times strikingly similar to the devices of restraint devised by his father. Nor does it adequately introduce us to the character, as opposed to the individual.

These negatives are a great pity because there is some excellent writing here. Some of the problems arise out of the fact that, as a work for students, there has to be something for them all to do!

Some of the performances are very strong. Luke Clayson, as Daniel Paul Schreber, gives a touching, insightful performance. Lynda Ferguson, as Trish, is convincing. Mario Spate, as Aaron, seemed to have little to do until his final scene with his girlfriend's sister (Fran, played by Angela Annese) where he gave one of the best performances of the evening.

Not all of the cast are of this standard, and there were a couple of very misguided moments in the direction. At one point, Christopher Roberts, as Geoff, plays a scene that seems designed to redeem his character, but because he is telling this to his daughter upstage, the whole scene is played to the back wall.

However, this show is all about students and learning, so in ten years time, we will look at some of these people on stage, in film and on television, and say "I remember this student show years ago..."