

Somewhere City

Reviewed by Cameron Woodhead

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**Fusion Theatre, La Mama Courthouse
Season ended**

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MARK Twain once described New York as "a splendid desert - a domed and steeped solitude, where the stranger is lonely in the midst of a million of his race".

That sense of the loneliness of the crowd, of the other lives we filter out when we live in a densely populated urban environment, permeates Somewhere City, though it's full of hidden and unexpected connections, too.

The piece has been devised by Fusion Theatre - a Dandenong-based ensemble of performers, some with disability. Some of our richest, most progressive theatre comes from such companies: the world-renowned Back to Back Theatre, or the ambitious Rawcus.

Somewhere City isn't an artistic accomplishment of that calibre, but it does achieve a style of visual and choric theatre that shines a reflective light on city life.

Starting with a procession of performers constructing a model cityscape on stage, the action keeps returning to iterated scenes on a packed train.

A secret romance blossoms between strangers, a boy talking loudly on his mobile gets narky at other people's lack of courtesy and in one distressing sequence, a man has a public breakdown and everyone ignores him, or makes an excuse to walk away.

Tamara Searle's astute direction (and thoughtful video and set design) helps to craft theatre that is tightly focused on the complexity of urban living, shifting seamlessly between desolation, poignancy and comic frustration. Somewhere City shows how behaviour we see as normal - rudeness on public transport, or giving strangers in distress a wide berth - is actually a bit of a disability itself.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/theatre/somewhere-city-20121219-2bn31.html>