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Angela a woman of the worlds

IT MAY not be possible to explain a Jenny Kemp theatre experience in words, but here goes.



Still Angela
By: Jenny Kemp
Where and when: Playbox at Merlyn Theatre, until April 27
Reviewer: Kate Herbert



Angela No. 1: Lucy Taylor as the young Angela with Simon Wilton.

Still Angela is written and directed with provocative flair by Kemp. It is steeped in femaleness.

Three women, Margaret Mills, Natasha Herbert and Lucy Taylor play Angela at different ages - or is it merely in different states of being or awareness?

It resonates with dreams and memories, echoes with snatches of music (Elizabeth Drake), tickles us with Kemp's collision of the banal and the sublime, and relies heavily and effectively on the physical.

Five actors move like dancers while dancers Ros Warby and Felicity MacDonald represent Angela's remembered mother and six-year-old Angela. Complex and geometrical lighting by David Murray sculpts the space and creates corridors, rooms, cages and even a chessboard. It illuminates a mesmerising landscape of desert and dried trees.

Still Angela is not a linear narrative. If you want a step-by-step story this is not for you.

All three women, often simultaneously, speak as Angela.

One version (Taylor) is young, overworked and confused by her relationship with Jack (Simon Wilton).

Another Angela (Herbert) is more critical, more despairing. An older Angela (Mills) speaks in the third person, commentating on Angela's world.

She appears traveling in a train over the Simpson Desert, standing on an imagined or remembered desert landscape or talking to her old lover (Mark Minchinton).

"There are two landscapes," Angela says. "One right on top of the other."

We live, like Angela, between two worlds: that of our imagination and that of our concrete, business-like and harried world.

The piece is witty and compelling; the balance of humour, lyricism and