

LaBoite tackles domestic violence with Sunnyside



Rae Wilson | 19th Oct 2015 8:00 AM



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CHILDREN are often the forgotten victims in domestic violence.

They observe physical and emotional abuse first hand but they have no one to teach them right from wrong.

The very people entrusted with that role are so caught up in their own conflicts that their behaviour can send the wrong message about relationships and unintentionally cause mental health issues.

Instead, these children must internalise the battle and come to their own conclusions about what they see.

As our state and federal governments look at how to tackle this scourge on our society from an early age, it's important the community finds ways to bring home the message that domestic violence is not okay.

Art is a perfect avenue to do just that.

La Boite Indie's Sunnyside, which opened last week and continues until October 31, manages

to tackle domestic violence, mental health, infidelity, addiction and peer pressure in one 65-minute performance.

At first, the scene on stage seems like the ordinary family stresses ahead of a 13th birthday party are unfolding in a suburban house.

Birthday girl Dani (Olivia Hall-Smith) and her friend Miranda (Vanessa Kruppenacher) play and tease like any teenage girls do.

But when dad buys the wrong cake and mum is stressing about the party, it quickly becomes evident all is not right with Dani's folks. And she knows it.

Instead of dealing with the chaos escalating in her world, she "glimmers" out to another world - a very dark world.

While escaping reality seems like a perfectly normal reaction for a young person, the darkened "other world" sequences when she blanks out in Sunnyside are frankly bizarre.

From talking about frozen puppies to frantic itching to disappearing escalators preventing escape - it is peculiar and unexplainable.

But NIDA writer Krystal Sweedman's important message that we need to develop healthy coping mechanisms for expressing our emotions and pain so we are less likely to use alcohol and other substances to numb or distract ourselves from our feelings, is a worthy and earnest premise for a play.

It is important to support emerging artists like Sweedman and director Heather Fairbairn, to ensure talented people can find ways to communicate societal change and weave delicate topics through artistic works.

Sunnyside is one of four indie shows running at La Boite through till December 5.

One show is \$28, two is \$39, three is \$57 and the season pass, for all four shows, is \$74.

[Find the program here](#)



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