

Lying Cheating Bastard

By James Galea & Nicholas Hammond

Directed by Nicholas Hammond

Presented by Soft Tread Enterprises

QUT Gardens Theatre, Gardens Point, Brisbane

www.BrisbaneCritiques.com



If there was ever a show to prove wrong the stereotype that theatre is “boring”, this is it. A delicious blend of drama and magic was orchestrated to create an absorbing one man show – which was carried brilliantly by co-creator Galea.

He may be a lying cheating bastard but he’s a very impressive bugger too! Well-known magician, James Galea, blew his audience away at Gardens Theatre with his card tricks and sharp acting performance.

It’s a scrapbook-style life story of Australia’s most successful conman, with an extraordinary talent that includes lying to people with his words and gestures. Jimmy “the Cricket” Garcia knew from a young age he was good “figuring stuff out”. He realised the games at the Easter carnivals he attended as a child were rigged. He used his skill to progress to other avenues of gambling until he eventually fell in with conman and gambler, Frankie, the man who taught him everything he knew. For a long while Jimmy leads a successful scam-ridden career, but even a conman can be fooled.

Galea has you utterly stunned by the end of this show. You’ve been tricked so many times. So many times you think you can catch out his deceptions, but you don’t. He says upfront you will never beat him, and it’s after his mind-blowing con at the end, you finally accept there’s no longer any point trying. His skills were so impressive I was in awe. The essential story didn’t carry much interest for me – but that’s not to say it isn’t exciting. If you like *Underbelly* and other underground dramas, you’ll like the sort of trouble in which Jimmy finds himself. What was more impressive, however, was Galea’s composure and delivery. Under the direction of Nicholas Hammond, he mastered the unique art of mixing a magician’s flashiness with an actor’s fluidity.

Set design by Jo Briscoe and lighting by Matthew Marshall was another wow factor. An elaborate and loud bachelor pad represented the high-rolling lifestyle of Jimmy, while the lighting was used cleverly to transform the setting to various locations.

Voice-overs representing the characters Frankie and fellow gambler Spiro added to the narrative.

Lying Cheating Bastard is innovative theatre that will surprise and leave you wanting more.

Lying Cheating Bastard is showing at QUT Gardens Theatre until the 21st of July. Bookings on 07 3137 4455.

Kellie Scott, 21 July 2010.