

# Theatre craves this bare poetry

## THEATRE CRAVE

By Sarah Kane. Verve Studios, 45 Flinders Lane, May 25. Until June 3  
Running time: 65 minutes  
www.fortyfivedownstairs.com  
Martin Ball Reviewer

ENGLISH playwright Sarah Kane is best known for a small body of violent and disturbing plays that shocked and affronted British audiences in the 1990s. *Crave* (1998) is perhaps her most lyrical and approachable work, a series of loosely connected monologues that chart the inner yearnings of four characters who remain on a bare stage throughout the play, yet who never interact with each other.

*Crave's* language is spare and poetic, by turns tender and despairing. Sitting in the new space at fortyfivedownstairs, I was reminded of Daniel Keene's writing, and the beautiful productions of his works that graced the same building some years earlier. This effect was emphasised by Naomi Edwards' direction here, which recalls the same gentle exploration of gesture and texture that Ariette Taylor achieved with Keene's plays.

What really is on display, however, is the product of Verve Studios, as all the actors in this show trained together at this independent acting school established in Melbourne in 2003.



Actors including Joel King, above, perform with confidence and control in Sarah Kane's poetic play *Crave*.

PICTURE: MARTY WILLIAMS

Kane's play lists four characters, named simply A, B, C, and M. Daniel Madrigali brings a lot of style to A's long opening paean to an absent lover, showing nuance and control as he plays with stress and rhythm in the lines. There's a confidence in

Madrigali's performance that says he wants to own the stage, backed by his thoughtful physical and emotional expression.

The role of A is doubled in this production by Gabby Brennan, who echoes Madrigali like a musical canon, but in a different

tone and voice. Brennan is more raw emotion. She too brought her own cadence to the lines, delivering an impressive level of intensity in her long soliloquy.

Joel King, Rachael Stevens and Jane Pitt round out this ensemble with committed if

more contained performances.

There are probably more emotive peaks and connections to discover in this play, but Verve's production is a good chance to see young actors on a bare stage, wrestling with the naked craft of acting.