

the young tycoons



Darlinghurst Theatre
Wednesday September 14

Reviewed by Lee Bemrose

The Young Tycoons follows the exploits of two power dynasties on the brink of change with the next generation about to take control. Two fathers, two sons, two media empires, loads of money, one shiny little city.

Set in Sydney, it's no surprise that the paths of the families – the Warburtons and the Voglers – should cross. As is to be expected, both families have histories and secrets they would rather not be made public knowledge. Throw in a muck-raking journo with his eye firmly fixed on the headline and pretty soon these very secrets ooze into the public arena.

A recurring refrain is the adage that “the first generation acquires it, the second generation builds it, and the third generation fucks it up.” Certainly the generation about to hand over the reins have amassed more money than God through force of their very different characters. Likewise, the young bucks are also very different to each other and have very different personal motivations, and it's with these different motivations that the drama and their fates begin to unfold.

Also under scrutiny are the roles of spouses, spouses-to-be, the concept of pre-

nuptial agreements (the mooting of a pre-nup in this world is met with “Did you just propose to me?”), friendship, loyalty and infidelity... all the juicy ingredients that make up life's pleasure and pain.

The Young Tycoons is not a serious expose (after all, it is fiction in spite of any similarities to real people), nor is it scathing satire. It treads a line somewhere between, the drama occasionally lifting in intensity and the humour sometimes straying into caricature. The set design is simple and inventive with the tickers tape light sign - quoting stock prices as well as giving each scene a comical heading – a nice touch.

Playwright Christopher Johnson's characters do feel a little sanitised given their circumstances, all seeming to have a conscience and sense of decency in spite of initial appearances, and it's as though he was a little too attached to his creations to make them all bad, all stupid, or too shallow. Then again, maybe that's the point.

Either way, there is a reason this midweek performance drew a capacity audience. Satisfying theatre indeed.

Season ends October 1
www.darlinghursttheatre.com