

The Atom Room

By Philip Braithwaite
Directed by Lyndee-Jane Rutherford
Starring Harriet Prebble, Taylor Hall
and Claire Waldron

Circa Two
9 June - 7 July

Tues - Sat 7.30pm, Sun 4.30pm

\$25 - \$52

\$30 Specials Fri 8 June & Sun 10 June

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The Atom Room is a new play set in Wellington in 150 years time. He's a policy wonk. She's an engineer who has scored the job of a lifetime, setting up a new colony on Mars. They're married. How's their long-distance relationship going to cope? Cue: the atom room. It's a highly-advanced virtual reality system where couples can 'meet' and 'interact' in ways so believable, it might as well be reality itself. Imagine an ultra-modern version of Skype, but you can touch, visit, feel, and love.

Playwright Philip Braithwaite explains the inspiration for his play:

"I was working at the Michael King writers' centre in Auckland. I got the ferry from Devonport over to the city, and on the way I got talking to a guy who told me that his wife and kids were in Switzerland. I thought about how difficult a long-term relationship like that would be. Around the same time I read an article about the first settlers on Mars and the challenges they'd face. The two ideas swirled around in my head until they clung to each other, and I found myself with the premise for a play."



Image: Ben Emerson (graphic design) Rebecca Tate Photography & Roc+ Photography



Taylor Hall and Harriet Prebble

The production is being directed by Lyndee-Jane Rutherford (*La Casa Azul*, *Hand to God*) and she describes it as "part love story, part thriller, part cautionary tale. It could be an episode from the popular Netflix series *Black Mirror* because it's exploring what life might be like for humans once technology gets so advanced it's hard to know when reality ends and virtual reality begins. It's also funny and very human; they're always important qualities to the work I direct. I've also got my favourite New Zealand band of all time, Minit, creating an outstanding soundtrack."

For this premiere production there's a unique pre-show prologue that audiences will be able to experience before the play starts. You will get to see what Wellington could be like in 150 years through a short VR experience in the foyer featuring music by Minit. We recommend people arrive early, as you might want to have the VR experience more than once.

The Atom Room stars Harriet Prebble (*The Father*), Taylor Hall (TV's *800 Words*, *Filthy Rich*) and Claire Waldron (*King Lear*, *Stupid B*tch*) with an award-winning design and technical team including Ian Harman, Jennifer Lal, Raylene Beals, Johanna Sanders, Brynne Tasker-Poland and Tony St George from Polytronik VR.