



## Theatre Double Feature Review: “Slut” and “What is the Matter with Mary Jane?”

7 Days Ago by [tayarountown](#)

**slut**  
BY PATRICIA CORNELIUS

**what is the matter with mary jane?**  
BY WENDY HARMER & SANCIA ROBINSON

**6-15 MAY**  
8PM TUES-SAT & 2PM SAT MATINEES

Bookings and covid safe plan via [fourthwalltheatrecompany.com.au](http://fourthwalltheatrecompany.com.au)

**FOURTH WALL THEATRE CO.** **ST MARTINS THEATRE SOUTH YARRA**

What is the Matter with Mary Jane by arrangement with HLA Management Pty Ltd. Slut by arrangement with Cameron Creswell Agency Pty Ltd.

Content note: eating disorders, domestic violence, rape

Tucked away from the bustling main streets of inner city suburb South Yarra and found down a leafy side street is St Martins Theatre. On a picture perfect Autumn afternoon, I attended Fourth Wall Theatre Company's double feature of "What is the matter with Mary Jane? by Wendy Harmer and Sancia Robinson and "Slut" by Patricia Cornelius. The theatre and staff are both very welcoming and I was excited to sit down for what transpired to be a set of poignant performances focused on pertinent topics in society.



*Photo:  
Supplied*

**"What is the Matter with Mary Jane?"** focused on the teenage Sancia Robinson (portrayed by various cast members) and her struggle with and subsequent diagnosis of Anorexia Nervosa. This production also referenced another eating disorder – Bulimia / Bulimia Nervosa. "What's the Matter with Mary Jane?" chronicled how Anorexia Nervosa was affecting every aspect of Sancia's life (such as interactions with friends and family members) along with the constant emotional torment (depicted as a 'nasty gang' in the production who were always feeding Sancia with lies and criticisms). The sensitive subject matter was aptly handled by a very capable cast – eating disorders were not made light of, rather it was a glimpse into a world that many people may not know much about or have a deep experience of. The impact on the audience was palpable, with audience members dabbing at / clearing their eyes at times; at several points during the production I was tempted to rise from my seat so I could have told the 'nasty gang' to leave Sancia alone! Modern references and elements were present during the show, with a particularly clever take on a cooking show segment. The staging and casting was executed well, with various cast members taking on the role as Sancia at times (and being members of the 'nasty gang' at other points during the show).



*Photo:  
Supplied*

**“Slut”** took the audience back to their school days (both primary and secondary) as lived by the central character of Lolita (played by Reschelle O’Connor) and her friendship group. Whilst Lolita is the central character of this production, much of the dialogue is provided by her friends / her friendship group. I particularly enjoyed the childhood stories that each friend told the audience about Lolita and also enjoyed watching the friends “grow up” / the progression of time during the production. Alongside the fun stories and fun aspects of school days was a darkness that her friends could see was enveloping Lolita, as Lolita was being drawn into dangerous situations and circumstances. The core themes explored by this production remain extremely relevant and topical: from the unwanted attention that females receive (even as children), to rape/ questions of consent and domestic violence. Watching the progression of Lolita’s life (as seen through her friends) was like seeing a train crash in slow motion – Lolita’s outcome comes as no surprise, however the tragedy of her situation isn’t diminished. Again, this production was superbly cast with all cast members altering their behaviour, outfits and mannerisms to depict the passage of time. Reschelle O’Connor (Lolita) negotiated challenging scenes well, without diminishing or trivialising the serious nature of the core themes being explored.

**VERDICT:** a valuable afternoon (or evening) of theatre – two poignant productions that will leave you in thought long after you’ve left your seat. These productions raise questions of how society can do better, especially in the realms of mental illness and the treatment of girls and women. If you’re a fan of theatre that leaves plenty of ‘food for thought’ for it’s audience members, then I recommend this double feature.

\*Disclaimer: I attended this production as a guest of Fourth Wall Theatre Company.

Tickets / more information:

<https://www.fourthwalltheatrecompany.com.au/slut-and-what-is-the-matter-with-mary-jane-2021>