

# Roaring swoonfuls of the human double helix

*Dubble In It: A Roaratorio in Praise of the Progenitors of the Human Genome,*  
**Philip Harvey and Rod Baker,**  
based on Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*

There was not a bloom in sight but all hailed to the human genome for Bloomsday in Melbourne's evening performance this year. Phillip Harvey and Rod Baker's delightful "Dubble In It: A Roaratorio in Praise of the Progenitors of the Human Genome" transformed Joyce's babble on the pages of *Finnegan's Wake* into a oratorio in seven forms. The potentials and particularities of our chromosomes, first explained by Joyce as the double helix seven years before it was discovered, was traversed from tango blustering to a hallelujah chorus and silly walks in between.

The evening commenced with the introduction to the human genome in swoonfuls. Anna Scheer lamented "The pleasures of love" whilst David Adamson made us feel what Joyce "meant about it" leaving us smouldering just in time for the tango.

In part II "The tango lecture" Kirk Alexander was the university professor in flights of enthusiasm about the double helix. He was eventually edged out by a pair of zealous tangoists.

The dance of love became an intimate coupling in "her and him", part III. He (David) and She (Jane McArthur) moved from introspective musings like chromosome pairings edging each other on towards vocal histrionics ("his fatherjohnson" "her little mary") before getting over it.

Then things got really lively. Part IV "Reckonition" called for

a Gilbert and Sullivan chorus led by Bill Johnson. "With helixes so splendid", Bill reminded one of a mad band stand leader commanding his "betwixt", "yesterdicks" and "twomaries" out of a word box of somethings into something at least highly comical.

Part V, "The Plainchant of the Cloudyphiz", reminded us of the changeability of the human countenance, and the human physiognomy for good measure, and in the end we were encouraged to drink to change.

We then entered a Gregorian Plainchant coupled with an Elizabethan madrigal for part VI "A Coil of Cord". Jane's lilting "a colleen coy" sent many an eyelid down to absorb the echoes of love pleasures long gone.

The oration finale was a Messiah-inspired Hallelujah Chorus with the cast and audience singing "Your Ominence! Your Imminence! And delicted fraternitrees!" The conclusion of the performance was Joyce's words alone "A way a lone a last a" leaving the audience in a state of transcendence. And then we sang again!

Kevin Lo, Musical Director, threaded and accompanied the performance beautifully with a rustic solo violin, and Brenda Addie's direction focused on using theatricality – heavy academic garb in blacks and ABC-princess accent – to achieve a sense of intelligence from the mad words. The performance delivered on lifts, lofts, laughter and leftness.

The atmospheric Monty's on Smith Street in Fitzroy was a perfect backdrop; lofty and yet the tables surrounding the ground-level theatre space brought the action up close.

**Roz Hames**