

French Theatre Company's 'Is Three Really a Crowd?'

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'Is Three Really a Crowd' is the 87th production for the [Melbourne French Theatre](http://www.mftinc.org) (Théâtre Français de Melbourne) in a history that goes back 38 years. Founded in 1977 by Michael Bula and A. David Gorrie. MFT's latest offering was performed last week in the Open Theatre at the University of Melbourne, the very theatre where it started.

Alec Gilbert skilfully directed this production by 19th-century French playwright Eugène-Marin Labiche. Full of malentendus and slapstick comedy, this is the story of Hermance, a bourgeois woman desperately trying to juggle her lover and her husband. With a truculent maid, a blackmailing taxi driver with knowledge up his sleeve, and a bumbling Alsatian manservant and his wife, all hell could break loose — and it does.

The eight-person cast obviously relished their roles in this romantic romp. It is to their credit that they kept the audience enthralled for the full two hours of the play. The play is entirely in French, but subtitled for Anglophones or those whose high school level French can't keep up.

Melbourne French Theatre relies on volunteers. All the actors and backstage crews have day jobs, which makes their commitment to such a production commendable. Having entertained more than a thousand Francophile and Francophones over the course of their eight-show season, they should feel proud of their achievements.

With two plays a year and a school incursion workshop, MFT is always grateful for people's support, either as actors, behind the scenes, audience, or sponsors. Find out more at www.mftinc.org.

-Jo

Jo Rittey is a freelance writer and French teacher caught up in the myth she can cram as much as possible into every day, devouring life like a large crème brûlée.