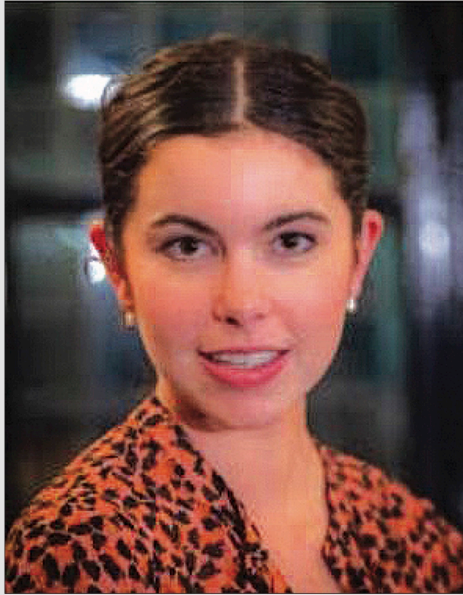# Observations

Broken River

● **Lily Johnson as Tracey**

■ Families and their varying levels of dysfunction make for gripping theatre, and **Cosmic Players Theatre Company** is drawing on that idea for its **Fringe Festival** premiere of playwright **Darren Brealey s** play **Broken River.**

Broken River follows the story of the **Morris** household after a parent dies. Tempers flare, love is on trial, and nothing can quell the years of underlying sibling rivalry.

Broken River tells a story where the love of family was never ceded, yet ego rises to take power.

Although **Virginia** is suffering from cancer and dementia, she clings to her sense of humour, her memories, and her way of life.

She's not giving up. She's a mother, a woman, and when she must be manipulative, calls upon her two boys, **Chad** and **Michael**, enforcing demands and obligations through guilt and fear.

Virginia is a matriarch, survivor of a harsh life, having fought her way through tough times for herself and her boys. She dreamed of a life with a wealthy man to take care of her every whim and care, but reality dealt a cold harsh blow.

Her two boys must be able to work together to sort out their mother's Final Will and Testament. **Virginia s** daughter-in-law, **Tracey** had grand illusions of becoming a famous reality television star.

Instead, she married **Chad.** What will extinguish the aggravating underflow of smouldering years of unspoken hatred between the three of them? What can tear down the walls and break through? In **Darren Brealey s** latest play, love itself is on trial.

Directed by **Elizabeth Way**, the play stars **Lily Johnson** as **Tracey, Joel King-Mayne** as **Michael, James William** as **Chad** and **Linda Cookson** as matriarch **Virginia.**

The stage is set for a fascinating and dramatic night at the theatre.

Broken River premieres in the 2023 **Melbourne Fringe Festival** at **Gasworks Arts Park, Albert Park**, opening at 7.30pm on Monday, October 16. Book your tickets at **melbournefringe.com.au/event/broken-river**
- **Julie Houghton**