



Theatre Review

Review: The Constant Wife

Venue: Salisbury Playhouse

Date: 22 February 2011

Reviewer: Charlotte Araya Moreland

The Constant Wife is a really rather splendidly written play about Constance Middleton, your average 1920's middle-class housewife, who seems to have what she would call, a rather different outlook on life. Aware that her unloved husband is having an affair with her best friend, Constance keep quiet and starts to unravel a nasty little plan to almost seek revenge on her husband when one of Constance's childhood sweethearts comes back from Japan on a mission to gain her love. Using the opportunity given to her by another friend to work, Constance begins to turn her disloyal husband, and her own rather dull life completely upside down...

In this lively, well-thought out play, what seemed to be particularly enjoyed was the scenery and set. The set kept you entertained when the lines said by the actors didn't, and as it kept changing-the flowers bought in by the butler in each scene grew more and more flamboyant and colourful as the play progressed- and its modern furnishings and the way the actors interacted with the props, it really added to the high quality of the play.

The actors were fluent in speaking their lines, and delivered them with clarity and the necessary expression, sometimes exaggerating to make a joke out of someone, and occasionally shouting for emphasis and surprising the audience. Although I felt that some of the senior members of the audience would not be able to hear what she was saying clearly because of her posh English accent, I felt that Maggie Steed did a fabulous job of playing the rich, fussy mother, who had high expectations of her daughter, and that she deeply entertained the audience with her theory for testing if one was in love (could you bear to use their toothbrush?).

I also enjoyed the quite simple plot of the play, with the complex thought processes of all the characters interwoven with the rather outrageous goings on in the storyline, such as all the affairs between people and all the insults thrown at one another from Constance and her husband, while one kept their temper and encouraged the other to smash wedding presents as stress therapy.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a rather splendidly written play, and I believe that Salisbury Playhouse did a wonderful job of performing it, and I was extremely impressed. I would definitely recommend one to go and see it, and I look forward to the next production that Salisbury Playhouse put on, as they never fail to entertain.

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