

Theatre Review

Review: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Venue: The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton

Date: 22 February 2011

Reviewer: Kirby Dunwell



A Midsummer Night's Dream. When people read the name, they often class it under the umbrella of 'Shakespeare' – a little dated and hard to understand. However, Headlong Theatre's adaptation of this classic masterpiece gets back in touch with younger generations with its use of multimedia and setting. It was one of William Shakespeare's romantic comedies, taking two couples and challenging their lives for one another by inducing false impressions of love through Fairies, who also seem to be having problems themselves when it comes to affection. With donkeys and disaster, this production is an excellent chance to appreciate Britain's literary heritage.

The play is set in a 1960's film studio, in which a Hollywood movie is being filmed. The love-lives of characters on and off the stage use Shakespeare's original texts to combine a classic romantic comedy with society we can all relate to. The audience will often see familiar props - such as 3D glasses and tricycles – to also keep the feel of a modern play, which really helps the audience to empathise with the characters. The twisted stories of Helena, Demetrius, Hermia and Lysander – as well as Hippolyta and Theseus – are followed as the characters journey deeper into mystery and magic, as well as going deeper into themselves. The ideas of love and romance expressed in the play really draws the audience's attention to what is real and what is superficial, as well as being a suitable comedy for young people to enjoy.

I would recommend watching this play to any GCSE or A Level drama students, or indeed anyone at all who has an interest in theatre and the arts. Props, costume and multimedia are all pulled together to create the stunning adaptation coming to Salisbury's very own playhouse.

On a personal level, I thought the performance in general was very good – the acting quality, clearly very high. It's clear that the actors all had a voice in the directing of the play, which resulted in a very polished performance. However, I feel the language barrier was still present and to a modern day audience could be hard to penetrate, yet the general visuals of the play (costumes, props, scenery etc.) helped to ensure the audience's understanding.

In conclusion; the play was professional performance, and an inspiration to any budding artist – musical, visual or theatrical as it appeases all audiences. It has just finished its run at Salisbury Playhouse and continues on to Glasgow and Cambridge.

*The Young Reviewers Club is run by The Unit,
17 Endless Street, Salisbury, SP1 1DP.
For more information or to book our young
reviewers and photographers please get in touch*

info@unitspace.org.uk
01722 341408
www.unitspace.org.uk

