

LOVE PLAY

What is “sex”? For some, sex could signify love and comfort with themselves and other people. For others, sex could be something they feel entitled to or transactional. ‘Love play’ by Moira Buffini and directed by Dan Jones, explores how sex, consent and lust was viewed throughout the ages. It uses a metaphor of dating apps to seamlessly move through time periods whilst keeping the audience entertained with witty jokes about different historical figures.

The first thing I noticed was the set and how the space was used. The use of the Y Llwyfan thrust theatre set up allowed for easy set changes and allowed the audience to view the stage from three different angles allowing all the potential acting areas to be in view at once. Moments of set dress changes were played with as a humour scene as the actors interacted with the audience and entertained them. Subtle set dressing was changed to match the scenes and era however the main structure of the stone wall was kept the same. The vac-form worn, and weathered stone wall was used as a metaphor to show how even though the times were changing the central theme of love was still there. The vac-form allowed it to match whatever period as it gave the old, withered look.

Something that caught my attention was the backdrop that was painted black with what looked like white stars. When I got closer, I noticed that the pattern on the backdrop seemed to be splattered and upon asking Beth they said, “Originally the background was all black however after lighting checks we realised that we needed to add texture and we used white paint and splattered it on inspired by Jacksons Pollack technique”. I also asked if a more controlled pattern was considered to which I was told that originally the backdrop was supposed to be black but following lighting checks it was decided that they should add some texture.

The lighting throughout the show was used to create tension and add to the atmosphere of the scenes. The flat colours of the lighting intensified scenes such as the medieval woman producing a gut-wrenching scream that made everyone's spines shivers. The lighting flashed and then plunged the audience into the darkness. One of my favourite parts of the play was the use of lighting and how it involved the audience with it, the different lighting of stage and auditorium “marked the two distinct environments and enhanced the convention of the fourth wall through which the audience gazed into a separate theatrical world” (Alston, A., & Welton, M. ,2017, pg 41) which felt very impactful to me as a viewer. Even at the start there was already a connection established between the play and audience as there was an actor already sitting and waiting for the play to start as part of her character.

Overall, I really enjoyed the play. The societal message was strong throughout the play and was touched on with care but also humour.

Bibliography

“Originally the background was all black however after lighting checks we realised that we needed to add texture and we used white paint and splattered it on inspired by Jacksons Pollack technique”- Beth

Alston, A., & Welton, M. (2017). *Theatre in the Dark: Shadow, Gloom and Blackout in Contemporary Theatre*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.