

# THEATRE REVIEW

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### SYNOPSIS:

The year is 1840, and a young governess is to look after two orphaned children in a country house located in Bly. But, during her chores within the rooms and corridors, she realises that they are not alone. 30 years later, the past returns to haunt the Governess, who is forced to confess her darkest secret concerning the events of what actually happened to her and the children, whom were under her protection.

### FIRST-THOUGHTS:

'Turn of the Screw' was performed at the Connaught Theatre in Worthing It was an adaptation of Henry James' thrilling ghost story, which inspired Susan Hill's 'The Woman in Black'!

My first reactions when seeing the show about to begin, was the feeling of fear fast approaching. The moment the auditorium lights went out and the stage was lit, I was on edge!

'Turn of the Screw' is gloriously creepy! In terms of the horror elements, there were many well delivered jump scares that had my heart pounding!

But like all shows, it needs a good story at the heart of it along with good direction and engaging characters. So let's see how everything else turns out...

### WRITING:

The writing for the most part was pretty good. The characters were well defined, they were all rounded nicely, none of them felt one note or unnecessary, they all lived and breathed in the writing and they stuck with me in my memory, so much that I actually wanted to know more about them.

The dialogue was beautifully eerie. It was very, hauntingly lyrical and poetic, it moved at a great pace and had me intrigued in terms of the characters and plot. However the show, I felt, suffered a bit too much from some filler dialogue, as in there were quite a few lines here and there which I felt could've been cut, to give the show a much greater pace.

The story itself is intriguing and clever, the plot is constantly jumping backwards and forwards in time 30 years, and that was very clear in the writing where the scenes took place, but I couldn't help but feel in terms of the story that it might have been a bit TOO clever in terms of what the writing was trying to tell me.

The show does leave a lot of questions, it leaves the audience to draw their own conclusions, interpreting the plot, trying to work out what exactly did happen, which is sometimes good for a story, sometimes I love an ending that I get to interpret, but sometimes it can be a little mind-boggling and confusing which can sometimes take me away from enjoying the real meat of the drama and this is unfortunately is how I felt at the end of the show.

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### **CHARACTERS / ACTING:**

All actors were on their A game! There are some very LONG scenes for them to hold together with intrigue and excitement in order to keep a hold of the audience, and they achieved this in their performances phenomenally.

The Governess is a really well rounded character and her emotional storyline was conveyed effectively too thanks to Carli Noriss who gives an outstanding performance.

Other characters are written and performed well, and my favourite has to be the character of Florence, who is just chilling as an eight year old! Every time the character skipped on stage, singing a tune, I found myself raising in my seat and wanting to run because she freaked the hell out of me!

The best thing about the show, which all of the actors accomplished brilliantly, was the clear scene / time changes within the story, without going off and on-stage all the time. Usually with theatre when a scene changes, actors basically just walk off-stage and come back on in new costumes and the lighting changes to set a new scene. But that's not done here. The lighting still changes to assist the scene transitions, but the actors themselves, through most of the show, stay on stage, and when the story cuts back and forth in time, the actors make a clear change in their physicality with a slight change in the tone of their voices to show a clear age difference in the two time-zones.

There was not one moment when I didn't know what time-zone we were watching, and that's thanks to the actors who portrayed the story changes so well, and their achievement was SO GOOD that they deserved the HUGE applause they had at the end of the show.

### **DIRECTING / STAGING:**

The costumes were AMAZING! They were a sight of beauty for my eyes!

The set was very creepy, it had a kind of warped unbalanced design to it that had me on edge from the moment my eyes laid sight on it. And when the show began, the atmosphere was increased with the amazing sound design, which was used terrifically as a warning of incoming horror.

The horror and scares had a great pace and rhythm to it, they were built up through great suspense in the acting, staging, sound, lighting and then at the right moment the show had me jumping from my seat, nearly hitting my head on the ceiling! HOWEVER, I do feel that whilst the staging had a creative dynamic to it, I couldn't help but feel that there was a little bit of a wasted set in the show. The set had so many areas to explore, so many props to play with (one of which was a rocking horse... classic horror prop in my eyes) and not much was used from them, not many of them had a moment to add to either the story or the atmosphere. I just felt there could've been more usage of that wonderful stage.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS / SCORES:**

In terms of the story, you may need to see it twice to understand it better. I do feel it was a bit too complicated for its own good.

However the characters were a joy to watch, the horror was well paced and it was a thrill for me to be scared by the theatre for the first time.

All in all, 'Turn of the Screw' is very complex with an ending that left me questioning what I saw, but it was still a beautifully performed show, so I give it a...

**7/10**

The Turn of the Shrew runs until 26<sup>th</sup> may in theatres around UK. For more details go to <https://www.turnofthescrewplay.com/>



**FILM**

