

THEATRE REVIEW

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SYNOPSIS:

It's Tom's 55th birthday and suffering from early on-set dementia. As he prepares for his party, pieces of fading memory come crawling back, bringing life into him as he relives the days of love and joy, friendship and regret.

FIRST-THOUGHTS:

'The Nature of Forgetting' is a stunning piece of visual theatre! There is a great sense of scale to the show which contains very little set, props and cast members.

This was a triumphant piece of theatre to watch, you can tell that a lot of hard work went into it and that hard work paid off BIG TIME!

WRITING:

There's not a lot to say about the writing because the show itself is mostly made of physical theatre, mime, movement pieces, etc... it all relies on visualisation created by the use of props and the choreography. However there are a few lines of dialogue scattered here and there, what's good about the dialogue is that it's only used when necessary.

For example: we open with a quiet image of Tom, sitting alone, his mind all over the place, then his daughter comes in and explains what's happening with his party. At first the line of dialogue just comes across as like a normal every day set of words you'd hear from a person, not much to it I first thought, however as the play progresses and we delve deeper into the struggle Tom faces with his illness, the line is repeated through the sound system, glitching, fading in and out, the normal line of dialogue becomes quite haunting, it becomes heartbreaking as you feel the pain of Tom's suffering.

There is also a beautiful set of lines at the end of the play which had me smiling with a tear welling up in my eye, it's such a simple but beautiful ending line.

And that sums up the whole show really. A basic premise told beautifully, portrayed stunningly, outstandingly presented... simple, but REALLY effective!

CHARACTERS / ACTING:

There were some cracking actors in this production, all of them were on top form! Their characters were really well defined through the movement pieces.

What made me love them so much was their clear portrayal of the relationships between the characters without a single line of dialogue, it was all done through the art and beauty of mime, and I mean the physical nature of mime, there were no white gloves or face paints in this show, mime isn't about that, it's about the power of a story being told through an actor's physicality creating images with mostly nothing but air, and these guys ran with that method and achieved such great imagery for the stage.

CHOREOGRAPHY/MUSIC

The main storyteller for me in this piece was the choreography and the music. My goodness I have never seen a set of routines as mind-blowing as this! There were some amazing visuals for my eyes to view on the stage, I find it so hard to chose a favourite routine or image because all of them blew me away so hard that I nearly fell of my seat!

But if I had to choose a favourite use of choreography, I'd say as much as I loved the symbolism within some of the images and the fantastic bike sequence which nearly had me stitches, I think it has to be the very clever scene transitions without the use of actors going on and off stage or lights going to blackout, what made it work so well was that you can tell a scene transition was made by the slight changes in the actor's physicality and the shift in tone within the music and the movement.

The props and pieces of set were also a great use of the routines. What I loved most about the show was how minimal the set was, it was almost bare. You basically have four performers working with a few clothes hung on coat hangers, four school desks with a few pencils and four wooden chairs. Everything else is just a black stage, but the beauty of it is that it is almost like a blank canvas, we get the little set pieces and the blank canvas is painted on by the audience's imagination, our minds fill in the gaps in terms of where and when the scenes are taking place, and I found it so thrilling to piece together the scene settings without the need for a really over-the-top, glamorised designed set.

The music (which was done live) was like heaven in my ears! It was gorgeous to hear! And it was another great layer added to the storytelling of the show, the way it glitched at times when Tom struggled to piece his fragmenting memories together was painful to hear as I felt the torture of what the character was going through.

FINAL THOUGHTS / SCORES:

'The Nature of Forgetting' is an adrenaline filled, emotionally driven, stylised piece of beauty! I can promise you that by the end of the show your eyes will have nearly popped out like mine, for they will never have seen a sight as incredible as this!

10/10

The Nature of Forgetting runs until 15th June in theatres around UK. For more details go to www.retheatre.com



FILM

