

Beautiful burnout by frantic assembly



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The lights, the outstanding choreography, searing vitality, the knockouts and the unbeatable storyline, are all factors which made this particular play an unforgettable one. I had rather high expectations of the play when I read that Mark Ravenhill had directed one of the adaptations plus the engaging reviews I had read had led me to believe it was going to be brilliant.

However, even though the play was spectacular, from my point of view the storyline isn't something that would have attracted me initially and to be blatantly honest a few scenes during the production lost my interest and attention several times, therefore my expectations of the play were slightly let down by the ongoing boxing chatter and masculine cliché fight scenes.

A brief description of the story is the dream of a young man and his manager for the young boxer to triumph in the boxing world and become a legend, his dreams are in the blink of an eye stolen from him when during a championship game he is injured and disabled for life, showing that his abilities and love of the game when put into perspective weren't worth it due to the loss of his normal everyday abilities, this proves boxing to be a controversial sport.

The play was indeed gripping, due to its controversy, mainly because boxing in the past and present day is one of the most dangerous sports ever to be conceived by our society. It creates many disputable topics and arguments in today's world. The play was undoubtedly contemporary as shown by its many predominant features. This is an obvious observation due to the swearing, colloquialism and contemporary linguistics throughout.

The use of visual aids were frequently in use, which consisted of lighting and sound, these played a huge factor in the success and outcome of the play, they did so by using the lighting as an emphasis on the emotion of the storyline, both intimate and intriguing moments, for example when Cameron was struck down the lighting was changed from an exciting purple (to convey an up-beat fight) then drastically to a blood red (in order to show defeat and violence).

Furthermore, there were absolutely no set changes, instead they impressively did so by depending solely on lighting to change it, quite impressive from my point of view. Another inspiring attribute to the settings of the play was the use of screens which were placed behind the stage, they were very useful in transmitting messages concerning the storyline, sentiments and outlook of the characters. Also the stage was combined with a boxing ring, which made the scene more realistic and believable, it was placed in the centre of the theatre, with the audience surrounding the stage except behind it, where the screens were located.

The set was ever-changing, which gave an exuberant and dramatic effect, during emotional and key moments of the play the entire stage would spin round. There were very few props, however the ones that were present, gave the set a symbolic atmosphere and deepened the meaning of the play (e. g. the washing machine). The sound was also incredibly dependent on the emotion of each scene, it played a vital part on transmitting the adrenalin the boxers were feeling, the music was very loud with an engaging and overwhelming base, which gave the audience a lively and exciting rush.

On the down side, from my point of view there were limited boxing sound effects, I personally thought they could have played on it and emphasized it, for example when one of the characters hit something or someone they could have added a sound to symbolize the action, such sounds that are stereotypically featured in action pictures, this effect would have transmitted more of an enthusiastic and stimulating experience on the audience's behalf. Both the style and the form of the play were superb. However I was led to believe that the production was going to be along the lines of Berkoff stylistics, physical theatre.

It did although have sufficient amounts of physical theatre, although from my perspective if the play was to have used more of it, it would have improved it, one fine example were the training/dancing sequences, the dancing was absolutely in sync, well coordinated and both matched the theme and emotion of the play. Some of the Gestus were quite mediocre and repetitive, on the other hand some created a chilling atmosphere (e. g. at the end fight when Ajay and Cameron were fighting and using still image combined with Gestus in order to make the fight more intriguing).

The utter most outstanding piece of acting style in my opinion was the exaggerated still image to which represented feeling and emotions of the characters. The acting style was a mix of naturalistic at times and physical theatre. In amongst all the physical fight scenes and energetic dance scenes, there were also deep and emotional scenes, for example when Carlotta came onto the stage at the end and dressed her disabled son, I believe it was a directors message, showing how dangerous boxing is as a sport and how

detrimentally staining and permanent the outcome can be injury wise, this scene was utterly entrancing.

I connected most to this scene as I felt immense sympathy and sadness during this particular moment, as did everyone in the theatre. Frantic Assembly pulled off an outstanding performance, however my personal conclusion is mutual, I neither enjoyed it immensely nor did I dislike it. My final conclusion and memories of this play was that I was thoroughly impressed by the occasional build up of tension, exaggerated still images, the lighting, the shadows which echoed throughout the entire theatre and moreover the music, which was both penetrating and perfectly suited for this type of production.

This production allowed the audience to uniquely enter and understand the boxing world in more depth, by expressing and transmitting the emotion into the audience, it unexpectedly highlighted the fighter's feelings and thoughts towards boxing and not just the cliché spectator view and opinion.