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audience reviews

Richard III, Big Idea Theatre

Review: I'm not the biggest Shakespeare fanatic around, but I went to this with a friend and was pleasantly surprised. Richard himself was nothing short of brilliant, as was Margaret. Some of the supporting cast was less successful as I felt that some of them didn't really understand what they were saying, but overall the show was well done. Knowing the history behind the story was helpful, otherwise keeping all of the characters and their relationships straight can be difficult. The set was amazing; I never knew you could do that with paint!

Review: We saw this show on its opening night. Another thought-provoking production. Richard was superb, and the rest of the cast featured excellent stand-outs. After seeing this show and then thinking about it for a week, the more I think about it, the more I enjoyed it. What BIT has done in that intimate space is marvelous. Well directed, acted and again sound and lighting was wonderful. I highly recommend this show and for all to support this type of theater in the Sacramento Area.

- Steve Isaacson, DMTC

Review: It's wonderful that the Big Idea Theater is putting up the best of the history plays with a solid cast. The actor who plays the title character is outstandingly versatile, bringing a broad diversity of Shakespearean language to vibrant life, and overall there are no weak links in the ensemble. There are just two things to keep in mind about this production. The first is that it's very thorough and nearly uncut. Richard III is the second lengthiest of Shakespeare's plays, so get ready for a full evening of conniving soliloquies, ferocious insults, and spectacular altercations! The second thing to keep in mind is that a number of actors play multiple roles (of course this is standard practice for community theater, and none of us mind. . .it's even sort of fun in a way). I just advise you to take five minutes and double check that York-Lancaster family tree, or read a Wikipedia plot summary before you go to the theater. That way, you'll maximize your enjoyment of this excellent production. "Nest of spicery". . .ha ha!

Review: Stunning! I'm afraid that I can't link names to most of the character faces, but Brian Harrower was brilliant as Richard, Jeffery Heatherly was splendid as Buckingham and Nina Breton was harrowing as Margaret. You could understand every word any of them said. One thing that would really help audience members would be a family tree, or an addition of relationships [e.g., cousin of Richard and a Plantagenet, or whatever]. This could perhaps be posted in the lobby or on the doors for those interested in untangling the

Red and White Roses participants. The set was excellent, with beautiful sliding doors that often separated the scenes; and the sound [by Benjamin T. Ismail, who directed "Almost, Maine" so well] was superb. Lighting [Nic Candito] touches, such as during the dream sequence and some deaths, were very effective. Some of the supporting cast were clearly first-timers, but overall, Justin L. Chapman did a masterful job of directing a large cast in a HUGE play in a small theatre. Well done!

Review: I saw this show in preview and all I can say is I hope that the cast tightens up the production through the run. The show was 3.5 hours long and the scene changes which basically consisted of moving some furniture on and off took too long. The actor playing Richard is good, but it was strange that he was the only one with an accent. Some of the other performances were good, but mostly it seemed like most of the cast was really young actors who don't quite understand Shakespeare. The owner said they are committed to doing a couple of Shakespeare shows a year, if so they need to make these productions more relevant and interesting than this production was. It was your standard Shakespeare you would expect to see in any park in the summer, it definitely did not have any Big Ideas.

Review: I'm not an expert on Shakespeare but I enjoyed this production. I got kind of confused sometimes. There a lot of characters to keep track of but Richard spelled out in the first scene what he was going to do and then he did it. A lot. Even if some of the details are blurry you just have to hang on and go for the ride. I wonder if this play was the inspiration for Kind Hearts and Coronets--similar plot but this was definitely not a comedy. Richard was marvelously evil yet compelling. Some of the actors played two parts. I thought that was kind of fun. The actress who played the old queen who taught the other queens how to curse was seriously tragic but she was a hoot and amazingly believable playing the young duke. ("Rebel without a clue," my friend called him.) Another great twofer was the young man who played both the saintly Edward and the heroic Richmond, parts well suited to his recruiting-poster good looks. But then he also played and was barely recognizable as, the really nasty assassin. Be sure to go to the restroom before the show. It's about ninety minutes until the intermission.

Review: Richard III was wonderful! Dick 3 is my favorite of the history plays, and BIT did an excellent job. Justin and cast struck a good balance between cutting enough material to keep the play to a reasonable length and staying true to the original text. Richard III is a long play, but the cast's high-energy performance never let it feel long. The performances of Richard (Brian Harrower), Anne (Mariana Seda), and Margaret (Nina Breton) were standout. Great show!

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