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"The Silent Language"



★★★★ I am one for trying to promote the smaller theater companies. Since they do not have the dollars to promote the productions they bring to their stage, it is word of mouth and our reviews that bring the people to them. TUTA Theatre Chicago is a young troupe whose desire is to bring innovative works to the stage- works that are International and have true meaning. "The Silent Language" by Miodrag Stanisavljevic "Language" is a Serbian Fairy Tale with music (translation by Zoran Paunovic) and directed by Jaqueline Stone.. It is an adaptation of an old Serbian folk tale (original title- "Nemusti Jezik"). You might ask, "What is the Silent Language". In this story, it is the grass, the rain and all the animals ! The point of this is to bring to our attention (as all folk takes, must have some meaning), that humans tend not to listen to what is being said or the sounds of the wind and what they might be. Humans, for the most part are self centered and only focus on what it is "they need".

Our hero in this story, a servant boy named Poor Gasho (a strong performance by the energetic Max Lotspeich) who finds himself in the forest, alone trying to have a better life and to not be a lowly servant. Through the snake that he saves, and her mother, he is given the power to hear "The Silent Language" and seeks to find the Princess, who is being held captive by the evil "Threest" (deftly handled by Aaron Lawson), the greatest and vilest forest resident. Along his way, Gasho meets all types of animals and witches and over 90 minutes, he climbs up and jumps down in order to save the princess (the lovely Carolyn Molloy, who also takes on other roles) . There is even a four round boxing match (sort of boxing- but not with words, but spells).

This is a gallant effort by a young troupe to bring Chicago audiences something unique, and I applaud them for taking the adventurous road to bringing something different to our city. Part of the problem is the space they use, a loft on the second floor at 2010 West Fulton (at Damen Avenue) just North of Lake Street and while the set is unique (Michelle Lilly is quite creative), some of the audience members didn't know if the chairs they selected were part of the play, and with all the nooks and crannies, there were times, we did not know where the voices were coming from (or maybe we were not supposed to). Being an enchanted forest, I guess it was always dark so the ogres and witches would come out so perhaps Keith Parham's lighting was meant to be very dark. Branimara Ivanova's costumes were incredible and I loved Wain Parham's original music.



The cast of players were as energetic a group of actors as I have seen. They were non-stop running off as one character and coming back (costume change) as another and never did they error in which they were playing. They should all be congratulated on the work they did : Jaimelyn Gray, Angela Bullard, Sean Ewert (a great Boogie-man) and the incredible Laurie Larson. As I said, the set is dark and multi-leveled but there are some very neat items that make it interesting. The props are a key to this type of show and there are a great many unusual items gathered by Oliver Todd.

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You may ask, why not a “recommended” on this one- I guess, to be honest, because the story is a bit inane and the venue too small to make this story seem possible. Fine actors, so-so script and due to the space, the director was very limited. The choreography (fight-Kirk Anderson) and wedding (Aileen McGroddy) were nice pieces of work. Oh, yes, there is a happy ending (don't all fairy tales end happily ever after?

“The Silent Language” will continue at Tuta Theatre Chicago through May 19th with performances as follows:

Friday at 8 p.m.

Saturday at 4 and 8 p.m.

Sunday at 4 p.m.

Monday night, April 29th is Industry Night at 8 p.m. (pay what you can) There is no evening performance on May 4th!

Tickets are \$25 open seating, seniors, students and children \$15 and can be purchased by calling 1-800-838-3006 or online at www.brownpapertickets.com

for more info on the company, celebrating its 11 th season, visit www.tutato.com

Plenty of FREE parking on the street and there is a bar so you can grab a drink to get in the mood for a different type of “Fairy Tale”

To see what others say, visit www.theatreinchicago.com , go to Review Round-up and click on “The Silent Language”



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