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Next issue: Friday 23rd May Deadline: 10am, Thursday 22nd May

(4th Week)





You should be warned: Camille is not going to make your week. Theatre rarely gets more depressing than this - the age old story: prostitute meets nice young man, learns how to love, is forced to leave nice young man and then dies of tuberculosis. 'Any man can make a sixteen-year-old virgin love him; but to win the love of a whore - that is something worth doing.' We've heard it before, but this is as close to Dumas' original as things are likely to get, with a new adaptation of La Dame aux camélias by the artistic director of the Lyric, Neil Bartlett. Bartlett's script is well crafted and remarkably engaging - he strikes a good balance between colloquial language and a more austere theatrical tone, and manages to mingle some humour in between the many darker moments. The laughs may be few and far between, but the wit certainly pervades the entire play.

This particular production was a bit of a mixed bag. Directed by David McVicar, best known for his operatic work, the play was constructed in broad strokes, rather than with the attention to detail which one might expect. In some respects this worked well - the set was effective and worked well with a variety of contrived set pieces, and the lighting was never less than effective - but in others it left the play curiously without impact. Several pivotal scenes slipped by rather quickly (as with the crucial confrontation between Marguerite and her lover's father), and there was a curious lack of balance in the play; not much happens to start off with, then things rush by to fit the plot into the time. The odd dramatic gesture also seemed rather out of place, as anyone seeing the end of Act One will testify.

Daniela Nardini, the star attraction as Marguerite, was very impressive, and lived up to her formidable reputation. She underplayed the first act, but built up to an impressive climax (no pun intended) by the end of the second. Dying on stage is never easy. and she managed it with great sensitivity. Unfortunately she was let down by her love interest, Elliot Cowan, who whined his way through the script, and lacked any character development. The supporting cast were fine, and there was a continuous expression of multiple talents (most characters played a tricky piano piece at some point), but there were irritations

Daily: 9.00

7.30*, 8.00*

Thurs: 9.15

Thu: 7.00

Thu: 1.15

Thu: 4.50, 9.1

3.10, 6.00, 8.50, 11.40

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Thu: 11.40pm

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Thu: 12.45, 1.15,

4.00, 4.30, 7.15, 7.40

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X-MEN 2 (12A)

Nor fork

larly, seemed to struggle to work out how to shape the character. Frequent accent fluctuations throughout the cast didn't help matters. Not that I would recommend against this play - it's moving and thought provoking. Indeed, it's one that really ought to

in each performance - Prudence, particu-

be seen. One just expects a bit more of a major touring London production. Nardini makes things worthwhile, but don't expect to be overwhelmed

Greg Sanderson, 20.05.03

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The first night performances from the cast of four were lively and confident, though the most forceful conviction is required for a play that is supposed to be strongly visceral and physical. Sam Brown was excellent in the leading role of Mark Renton, the most relaxed of the cast, exerting a presence in an understated manner. The comic timing of Ross Burley as Spud was also spot on, bringing big laughs from the audience. There was room for more menace in his other role as psycho Begbie, though he still conveyed the necessary sense of unease and latent violence whenever he entered the scene.

The production worked very well, with what appeared to be a minimal set superbly augmented by pivotal props such as dead baby Dawn and the toilet from hell descending from the roof on ropes. The lighting was also effective, creating the contrasting atmospheres of dingy squat and rapturous nightclub. And after the success of the soundtrack of the film, it is fitting that a lot of effort had gone into choosing the soundtrack for the OFT production (it is even on sale!).

Trainspotting is well worth getting along to see, and with every performance this production will gain power.

Ben 0'Loughlin, 20.05.03

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