

“If You Are Happy and You Know It, Vote for Me”

How do you know whether you are free or not? And how do you know when to make a choice?

Politics were always a driver for the creation of the new works. Artists can not change the world but addressing issues and asking questions, making people to think and notice things was always a function of the arts.

There are different topics about politics which got addressed lately. Probably one of the most concerning is a question of immigration. Is it good or bad when people are coming to a different country to live and work? The story of *AntiCone* is built around this question. This physical drama does not use many words but rather uses visual, sound and dance to tell us the story. The immigrant who works on the building of the wall against her own country. The wall which will prevent her brothers to come in. She witnesses one of her brothers being killed after she let him in through the wall. As a punishment, Creon (who is protecting his country by building the wall) makes her part of the wall. Now she is the live frontier between her brothers and Creon's country.

AntiCone is the powerful production presented by two incredible artists – Natasha Mirny and Tia Shearer of DC-based Happy Theater. They used traffic cones to build the wall and contrast that bright orange with neutral black of the costumes. They used a chalkboard to communicate with the audience. They used sound to help deliver the message through the dance. It is not a dance show, it is a story told through movement.

Both of the artists have something special about them. Natasha Mirny is a choreographer and stage director, and she expresses herself through dance and the power of physical motion. Since *AntiCone* uses few words, most of her part was presented through the dance and it fascinated me how her entire physical being reacted to the music. She was not dancing, she *was* a dance. Tia Shearer interpreted her part through mime and voice. She transformed into different characters by small costume changes, and every time she stepped on stage, she was someone else. Her control over the voice and ability to switch the character in a split second was an incredible experience.

At the end of the show, they said that the story has no planned ending – the audience decides how it ends. It is an interactive show and the audience has a choice. They also mentioned that not even once the audience failed them with the choice. It gives us hope that people know right from wrong, and people are good.

Next time you have a chance to see *AntiCone*, come and see it. You need to receive this message; you need to experience this show. The show, as well as the message, as well as the performers, have unbelievable power in communicating and awakening good in people. Perhaps, this show will make the world better. Perhaps, it will give people a chance to make a choice and carry that choice into the world.

Review by Valeriya Nedviga
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