

“You Will be Able to Tell Our Voices Apart”

What is the first thing which comes to mind when you hear Shakespeare? Are you bored by that, or you are just rolling your eyes because it is everywhere? Or you are like me and you remember a particular scene from one of his plays? No matter what it is, every single time you go to see a play where Shakespeare is mentioned, you come with high expectations.

Aim'd so near is nothing like you expect. It goes above and beyond and makes the show a fantastic experience for the audience. It takes the neglected characters from Shakespeare plays and put them in the same room at modern time. Two women are trying to figure out why they were put there and who they are. In the moments of distress or conflict, or with the word-triggers, they start to quote Shakespeare without even realizing it. It feels like there are 4 characters on the stage but they live only within two bodies.

The characters are trapped in the hotel room. There is no particular reason for that but such generalization allows the authors to avoid talking about specific time or location. Also, what can be more generic than the hotel room? One of the characters – Emilia (Amy Fritsche) – is trying to write a memoir but she does not exactly remember her past. The other character – Angelica (Jess Tanner) – is troubled by her past but does not remember why. They go through the range of emotions trying to realize what is the purpose of all this and why they are there. Except for the room, those characters are forced to share the recorder and work together on the puzzle while the purpose of their stay gets apparent to them.

Two characters in a hotel room are sharing two useless objects and going through their own circles of hell. The set was as minimalistic as it could be – the small wall upstage mostly served as the storage for a couple of props; it also framed the space making it feel more confined. The costumes were simple too. The lighting was partially dictated by the space (they only had a front light and one high side) but felt extremely purposeful; also, it did help tremendously with the feel of the hotel room. The sound was almost non-existent – except for the alarm and performers singing on stage in one scene, there were no other sound cues, which made it feel a little bit empty and unfinished but supported the illusion of being in the hotel room amazingly.

Fascinating was the work of the actors on stage, as well as the work which was done by the director in the preparation of this show. Both of the actors showed a wide variety of emotions through gestures and body language. Jess Tanner showed a phenomenal control over her voice changing the timbre and dynamic depending on the situation. Amy Fritsche was amazing with her every gesture and position on stage and portrayed her character with every pose. It would be wrong not to mention the director of this production, Courtney Brown, who presented all the best qualities of the actors through the staging choices, as well as made the experience for the audience unbelievably realistic.

Are you still feeling bored when you hear Shakespeare? Well, next time you are bored, come and see *Aim'd so near*. Not only it is a phenomenal show on its own presented by extraordinary young artists, but also it might give you some new insight into the depth of Shakespeare characters.

Aim'd so near was presented by the BorderLight International Theatre + Fringe Festival at the ideastream Stage at Miller Classroom from July 25-27, 2019, Cleveland, Ohio.

Review by Valeriya Nedviga
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