

Reviews of plays we saw during 2018-19

Twelfth Night

Ten of the Theatre Group went, with some trepidation, to see a modern production of Twelfth Night at the Lyceum on Wednesday the 3rd October.

The play opened at a house party in the 1970's. The partygoers were dressed in kaftans, silver platform boots, beads and other assorted flower power outfits. Having spent themselves on drugs, alcohol and dancing, one of the group found a copy of Twelfth Night and decided that they should enact the play which they did with rock music, dancing and great comic acting. They made full use of Shakespeare's love of mixing genders to confuse the audience, for example Toby was played by a woman- even the Bard did not see that one coming. It was lively, funny and very entertaining. Most of the group thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Cyrano De Bergerac

11 of the Theatre group attended Cyrano De Bergerac on Wednesday 31 October.

'The hugely romantic Cyrano de Bergerac is given a Caledonian heart in a new production of Edwin Morgan's legendary Scots translation directed by Citizens Theatre Artistic Director Dominic Hill.

The swashbuckling and flamboyant Cyrano has a personality as large as his nose but it's this facial carbuncle that prevents him from revealing his love for Roxane. He lends his poetic skills instead to the more outwardly handsome Christian, who wins Roxane's heart through his passionate ghost-written letters. Through the years, Cyrano continues to put quill to parchment, risking his life in the process, to express his true feelings for the woman who sees him only as a rambunctious uncle until it's almost too late...' (taken from Lyceum Website).

The whole play is done in rhyme and in Scots. How the lead actor remembered his lines was amazing because he had a lot of them. Personally I did not really enjoy this play but could appreciate the performances. Several members of the group thought it was great while others took a bit longer to adapt to the language and verse.

Touching the Void

Nine of the group attended the play Touching the Void, at the Lyceum Theatre on Wednesday 13 February.

I have to admit not looking forward to this production because of its subject. The play opens in a pub in Glencoe where a wake is being held for Joe Simpson who recently died in a mountaineering accident. Present is Joe's sister who is trying to understand why people feel they have to put their lives at risk by climbing.

Also present is Simon who had been on a previous climb with Joe when they had attempted to climb the perilous Siula Grande Mountain in the Peruvian Andes in 1985. On the climb Joe had an accident and broke his leg. Connecting himself to Joe by a rope, Simon tried to lower his injured friend to safety, but Joe fell down a crevasse and was left

dangling in mid-air. After battling for several hours in freezing winds and knowing that they would both ultimately fall into the void, Simon made the agonising decision to cut the rope and send his friend to a certain death, thereby saving himself. Joe faces a mental battle as he teeters on the brink of death and despair in a crevasse from which he seemingly cannot escape. By some miracle he survived the fall and managed to get himself off the mountain.

It was a nail-biting adventure rich in psychodrama and suspense, well - acted and imaginatively staged, everything about this productions was superb and we all agreed that it was one of the best plays we have seen.

Local Hero

Many people remember the film Local Hero with great affection. Written by Bill Forsyth, it was released in 1983. Burt Lancaster played an oil tycoon (Mac) who wanted to buy the village of Ferness in the Scottish Highlands and build an oil refinery.

One resident owned the shoreline and he refused to sell, much to the dismay of the other residents. This Local Hero persuaded Mac the area had more to offer than oil.

This is a new musical production of Local Hero, written by Bill Forsyth and David Greig, music by Mark Knopfler and directed by John Crowley.

This production was sold out at the Lyceum almost as soon as it was publicised and additional dates had to be added. As always we had our tickets booked in advance and nine of the Theatre group attended the matinee show on Wednesday 17th April. We were not disappointed – the music, staging and performances were terrific and thoroughly enjoyed by us all.

If you get the chance you should try and see this highly recommended show

The Duchess of Malfi

This was the last theatre visit of the season at the Lyceum in Edinburgh. Nine of us attended the performance on Wednesday 29 May.

The website describes it as 'Webster's The Duchess of Malfi is the most thrilling and chilling of the Jacobean revenge tragedies – an exploration of male rage and female resistance as two brothers try and control their sister, block her marriage and repress her agency with fatal results.'

We were warned that the play contained scenes of a sexual nature, bad language and violence which it duly delivered. The first two did not really bother any of us too much but the violence was horrendous. In one scene the Duchess was tortured then murdered and in the last scene there were I think 4 murders. Each murder resulted in blood - at one point they actually mopped the blood from the stage.

Having said that – the acting and staging were superb, but I cannot say that any of us really enjoyed it but it was thought provoking and led to interesting discussions on the way home.