

The idea of a stripped back take on 'Macbeth' may be very appealing to the modern generation. However, it being a hit with more traditional theatre goers cannot be guaranteed.

The opening scene began with Macbeth and Banquo fighting their classic bloody battle involving a lot of shouting, screaming and stabbing. This, along with the dimmed out lights effectively created a sense of menace, putting the audience on the edges of their seats.

Then, just like the previous adaptations of 'Macbeth', the three gastly witches recited their three prophecies to Macbeth and Banquo. Nana Amoo-Gottfried (Macbeth) then conveyed a sense of bewilderment and intrigue very successfully as he and Kayla Meikle (Banquo) were greeted by the Thane of Ross who, much to their surprise announced to Macbeth that he was now crowned Thane of Cawdor.

Madeline Appiah is cast as Lady Macbeth; the controlling, dominant, strong female character of this performance whose greed gets the better of her. She presents herself very emphatically in this role and has clearly studied Lady Macbeth's characteristics and attributes very closely to be able to successfully portray the part and deliver a convincing role.

Nana Amoo-Gottfried is cast as Macbeth; the tragic hero of the play. For me, he successfully captures Macbeth's gruesome, noble, terrifying personality which really drives this story onwards. Just like Madeline, Nana delivers a very believable performance and we see this throughout as he conveys Macbeth's ambition and greed accurately. Another example of Nana's high level acting ability is when Macbeth is wrestling with his conscience about whether to murder King Duncan or not, as he delivers a truly compelling performance.

This production is exceptional at working with what they have got. The stage for this play is used for every scene and this enables the story to flow and keeps the audience engaged. The play also doesn't have a band, so the actors create their own music using sticks and the set to do so. The scenery is also quite basic to say the least, but this, teamed with the dimmed lighting and a very close up audience, shows they have utilized the intimacy of the stage to achieve maximum effect.

The costumes of this performance are also not your typical Shakespearean attire, as we see Macbeth clothed in cargo trousers, boots and a biker-like waistcoat; not your usual royalty clothing. However despite not keeping to 11th century dress code, this play sticks with the traditional Shakespearean language, which in my opinion is a very intelligent decision that contrasts well with the other aspects of the play.

This adaptation of 'Macbeth' is especially unique as they have adopted a non-original casting approach, as they decided to have a woman (Kayla Meikle) play the role of Banquo which would typically be played by a man. Also, they have a man playing one of the three witches and the strong presence of black actors in lead roles gives the performance a refreshing feel.

This performance also highlights the key elements to a 'Shakespearean Tragedy' effectively. One of which being conflict, they displayed Macbeth's external conflict very well and showed us in detail how it derailed and deteriorated him as a person. Through the usage of soliloquies, we were able to understand exactly how he was feeling whilst battling his internal conflict; his ambition and his conscience.

Tragic waste is also a key feature in this play and this live production illustrates the tragic waste of nobility and goodness of Macbeth's character that are killed by his evil acts and intentions very effectively as they focus highly on him being a dedicated noble soldier in opening scenes as well as highlighting his oh so tragic flaws towards the end to really show us that both good and bad was lost with Macbeth.

Poetic justice is shown in this performance as we see Macbeth's hamartia or in other words, his desire for power and unchecked ambition get the better of him and consequently he dies along with his crazed, deluded wife. Whilst we are on the topic of poetic justice, this play also displays the supremacy of evil and the suppression of good very well in a way that we get to see Malcolm and Macduff come out on top and Macbeth fall to his fate.

The play also doesn't show Macbeth or Lady Macbeth die and chooses to have them die offstage, leaving the audience to use their imagination to decide what the deaths would entail, which in my opinion is a great idea.

So overall, the actors in this live adaptation of 'Macbeth' delivered spectacular performances which had a cathartic effect on the audience. Also, because the scenery was so sparse and different to the traditional setting, I felt that I wasn't distracted and it caused me to focus more on the characters and made me use my imagination. In my opinion the characters set the scene!

