

Stage feedback news

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Upstage reaches new heights

For those who have followed the progression of Upstage productions, this year's effort, "Our Country's Good", is among the finest ever.

First, it took a good, well-written script. The play portrays convicts who find redemption through the dignity of theater in the face of the British army split between those who believe criminals are born and incorrigible and those who believe criminals are made and can change. As the story unfolds, we discover the injustices and misery that have brought them here, the bad conscience that haunts one officer, the blind obedience, contempt, violence, and hatred of other officers, and in the middle, three officers who seek to humanize a society which is continuing to contaminate the world as symbolized by the aborigine it destroys. Nevertheless, the play has its funny moments, offers a few reflections on theater, and leaves the public with a note of hope when a reprieve is granted and the play within the

play opens at the end.

But this story could have fallen flat had it not been for the remarkable work done by the actors and crew under the direction of David Simpson. Often taking on double roles with impressive adaptability, changing accents and body language to express differences in class, sex, and social domination, the actors were stunningly intense, soliciting strong emotions and whole-hearted audience reactions. The make-up work made certain male characters played by women particularly credible. And the ultra fast scene changes by a well-organized backstage crew with lively backing music left no dead time.

Special mentions for Alice Lockwood's accent and body language as a convict in sharp contrast to her humane governor, Raphaëlle Guerbaai's accent and portraying some one so contrary to her own character, Thomas Newlyn's comic "theatrics", Yvette Raschetti's drunk scene, Eleonore Gresset's military obedience stereotype, Malyon Bimler's

cocky, grating defiance, the compassion in Sonia Barousse's voice, Juniper Tengblad's dynamism as a central character around which so much revolves, George Garnier's intensity and confusion as the torn Ketch, Siddarth Madhusudan's tortured dialogue with his phantoms and his final despair as the aborigine, Marie Pilaud's slow flowering from shy to "somewhat" brave, Rebecca Powell's deliciously witchlike Meg, Yumi Taupin's fine make-up and her poster work with Mathieu Bernadat and the team, Soraya Saidi's ultraviolet white glowing T-shirt which seemed to change the set all alone, and Sarah Daugas and Joshua Guerbaai beaming down upon them all.

A professional production in every way, this play finally owes a lot, of course, to the director, David Simpson who made all this happen as he has been doing so incredibly for so many years.

Thanks for a wonderful experience, all of you!

**an 83 year old convict
hanged by his own plait
for stealing a biscuit.**