
Review Of The Kate Mulvany's Adaptation Of Jasper Jones

Adapted from the novel by Craig Silvey, Kate Mulvany's Jasper Jones deals with dark topics of racism, rape, suicide and the stereotypes of gender roles in a light and whimsical manner through a 13-year-old Charlie's perspective. Directed by Nescha Jelk, the play is layered with many storylines from the protagonist Charlie's life. With the main plot being a murder mystery and the subplots being his friend Jeffery's problems, his parent's marital troubles and his transition to adulthood.

The play starts with the 16-year-old Jasper Jones appearing at bookish Charlie's window to help solve an awful mystery after stumbling across the dead body of Laura Wishart. The plot then embarks on a journey to introduce us to other characters and their struggles to find happiness. We meet Charlie's strict mother, his silent father, his Vietnamese friend Jeffery, local bullies and his first love, Eliza. Despite the jokes and laughs in the play, the mystery of Laura is still retained.

The perfect combination of dialogue between the characters and the direct narration by Charlie allowed the production to run smoothly. Each actor in Jasper Jones was worth noting. However, undoubtedly, the main credit of the production goes to James Smith and Roy Phung who played the roles of Charlie and Jeffrey, respectively. Jeffery's ability to balance humour and heartache leaves the audience in awe. Charlie's portrayal of geek urgency and the transition to adulthood is remarkable. Overall, it is fascinating to watch young characters being performed by adults who succeed in capturing the teenage awkwardness.

Designed by Alisa Paterson, the massive set of fabric forest captures the beauty of the Australian landscape. Even the simple single set pieces, like Charlie's bedroom corner, were effective in completely changing the location of the scene. The inbuilt hole created for the actors to leave the stage unseen was perhaps the most impressive part of the set. The collaboration between Paterson and the director Jelks created an artistic and practical set. Jelk utilised every scene in the production to its fullest. For example, dead Lauren is seen haunting Charlie while simultaneously rearranging the scene.

Lighting design by Nigel Levings establishes the mood of the scene successfully. The gothic atmosphere and mystery around Lauren's death is captured by the eerie shadow of trees and the moody lighting. Whereas the hot summer mornings are established with bright lighting.

Jasper Jones was a thought-provoking yet entertaining production. From the storyline to the set, everything complements each other impeccably. The hard work of the cast and creative team

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produced a captivating and stellar production. Jasper Jones was truly a pleasure to watch.

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