

What if Romeo & Juliet...

Reviews

DynamO
Théâtre

“ [...] A revolving stage (...) enables the 4 performers to give their all in this drama and offer a powerful performance to the 300 or so teenagers in attendance (...). (...) The power of love and hate does not come through the subtlety of the words, but through the lighting – ebbing back and forth between bright red and bright white - the music, the movement and especially the acrobatics, a DynamO Théâtre forte. (...) Even if the concept of this piece is uncommon and open, the 4 actors/acrobats/artists were able to impeccably and flawlessly provide an accurate and sensitive portrayal both physically and intellectually. A powerful performance along with a visually and symbolically rich adaptation.”

Marie Fradette, Le Devoir, May 6, 2017

“ [...] Throughout its original productions, DynamO Théâtre has shown great sensitivity in portraying the feelings young people experience and the situations they face, which sometimes seem complicated. What if Romeo & Juliet ... continues along the same lines by having the space throb thanks to a love story that is not as impossible as it may seem...”

Daphné Bathalon, L'espace Mon Théâtre, May 3, 2017

“ [...] you come to the conclusion that we are all of them, one day or the other. The bodies begin to climb, fall, fly, fight, tear at each other, sometimes hurriedly and sometimes slowly. Very quickly, you forget you are going to see a play by Shakespeare. At the end of the performance the company asks the question “What if we let them just be happy and lay down their weapons? What if this story ended well?”

Benoit Ricard, Le courant des Hautes-Laurentides, August 31, 2016

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Le Devoir

Marie Fradette

May 6, 2017

What if Shakespeare's words were scaled down to simple terms, keeping only what is essential, namely all the energy expended in loving or killing each other? In the end, what if the characters decided to lay down their weapons? This is what DynamO Théâtre director Jackie Gosselin offers up in a powerful movement-filled - restaging of the world-famous play.

A revolving set serves as a stage, on which two curved and wheeled staircases enable the 4 actors to give their all in this drama and offer a powerful performance to the 300 or so teenagers in attendance at the Maison des arts de Laval space. Marie Fannie Guay, Marc-André Poliquin, Dominic St-Laurent and Catherine St-Martin share the roles of Romeo, Juliet, Benvolio and Tybalt, switching back and forth from one character to the next, with each of them sensing and feeling what the other is experiencing. The power of love and hate is not conveyed through the subtlety of the lines, but through the lighting – ebbing back and forth between bright red and bright white - the music, the movement and especially the acrobatics, a DynamO Théâtre forte.

The set is filled with eye-catching details that let audiences determine the meaning and uncover the magic of the theatre stage. Even if the concept for this piece is uncommon and open, the 4 actors/acrobats/artists were able to impeccably and flawlessly provide an accurate and sensitive portrayal both physically and intellectually. A powerful performance along with a visually and symbolically rich adaptation.

L'ESPACE mon(theatre).qc.ca

Daphné Bathalon

May 3, 2017

Radiating Love

Could there be a more undying story than the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet? For its latest production, DynamO Théâtre turns to the two famous lovers of Verona immortalized by William Shakespeare. The play is still one of the most performed and restaged worldwide.

The beautiful What if Romeo & Juliet... production that premiered at the Festival Théâtre Ados festival does not merely recount the tragic story of the two teenagers born into enemy clans. It refuses to abandon them. In a restaging filled with tenderness, the company's artistic co-director, Jackie Gosselin, sided with hope. Her choice was that disasters are avoidable because we all have a role to play and a responsibility to take on when faced with a conflict.

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L'ESPACE mon(theatre).qc.ca (suite)

Daphné Bathalon

May 3, 2017

On stage are two red staircases: one is straight and the other curved. Father and son, mother and daughter, the two families have been at odds for generations. However light emerges in the shape of unconditional love. What if Romeo & Juliet ... offers an abridged yet not oversimplified version of the well-known (or not so well-known) tragedy. The production focuses on the main characters and key scenes: what different decisions could or should the characters have made. Thus opens the ball at the Capulets, where the movements of the dancers will later echo the fighting (what a brilliant idea to imitate the confrontation through the clashing of swords in the background) followed by the famous balcony scene, Mercutio and Tybalt's duel, the murder of Juliet's cousin and Romeo's exile. The production quite tactfully deals with the momentous scene where Romeo finds his beloved. It also shows great fondness in offering the characters the opportunity to finally lay down their weapons.

The 4 acrobat/performers (Marie Fannie Guay, Marc-André Poliquin, Dominic St-Laurent and Catherine St-Martin) very gracefully switch characters as they move through space with spins, jumps and somersaults. Romeo becomes Juliet, Juliette changes into Mercutio, Mercutio puts on Tybalt's gloves and Tybalt takes on the character of Romeo. They carry this out in order and disorder, joyfully and without concern for gender while using magnificent acrobatics that draw audiences into waltzes. The stage itself spins as it keeps changing the perception of events and time passing.

However the addition of a voice over, that of William Shakespeare himself (Lucien Bergeron) weakens the delicate balance between the choreographies and the lines spoken in the play. There is no need to expose the messages in the play, emphasize what the show is already suggesting with subtlety through movement and word. His intrusions break the otherwise fluid rhythm of the production.

Martin Sirois' exceptional lighting design is definitely worth mentioning. Playing with light and shadows, his design dazzles the stage at times by flooding the area with light, then outlining silhouettes in such a way that darkened characters are shrouded with light. The choice of colors is harmonized and beautifully brings out the reds and grays of the costumes and the set.

In all its original productions, DynamO Théâtre has shown great sensitivity in portraying the feelings young people experience and the situations they face, which sometimes seem complicated. What if Romeo & Juliet... continues along the same lines by having the space throb thanks to a love story that is not as impossible as it may seem...

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Le courant des Hautes-Laurentides

Benoit Ricard

August 31, 2016

The wonder of what is yet unfinished - Espace Théâtre

At Espace Théâtre last Thursday night, a large lively crowd of families was waiting impatiently to see the open performance of DynamO Théâtre's test run of "What if Romeo and Juliet...". It was a unique opportunity to discover the development of the acrobatic adaptation of the famed Romeo and Juliet.

Last Thursday night, "What if Romeo and Juliet..." had a chance to get away? This is what DynamO Théâtre offered up.

DynamO Théâtre is a combination of theatre and whirling with a touch of zaniness in a very serious world. The challenge is to convey through acrobatics and a few words what chord Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet has been striking with audiences since it was first performed. The work focuses on romantic love and its hazards. It is geared for audiences 8 years and up.

The project that began late 2013 may be culminating in the spring of 2017 at the Tohu space in Montreal in a different format. In fact the work is still being developed, even after two different residencies with the team at Muni-Spec.

LAY YOUR WEAPONS DOWN

Coartistic director Jacqueline Gosselin mentions that "Some of our intuitions still need to be confirmed. Tonight the performers may be looking for their lines or we may need to play a scene over. Thank you so much for coming in such large numbers. Know that you will be part of the creative process".

The lights go up slowly on a rather confusing zigzag of red and black metal objects. On a rotating set, two large twisting red staircases finally come into view. Next 4 actor/acrobats begin: "I am Romeo, you are, I was Romeo, Juliet". You don't know who's who. You forget about trying to identify them, because you figure out that we are them, one day or the other. Bodies begin to climb, fall, fly, fight, tear at each other, sometimes hurriedly and other times slowly. Very quickly, audiences forget about being told Shakespeare's play. In the end the company asks audiences "What if we let them be happy and lay down their weapons? What if this story ended well?"

NON FINITO

"I believe in children's intuition. The play is demanding and we will keep advocating it". The team explains that it does not hide the fact that this story is abstract and perhaps not within every one's reach. On the other hand, the children attending the performances reacted very positively to this unfinished work, which is more drama than clowning in nature. The works of Chagall may have first inspired the creative team in coming up with body movements, but this performance rather brings Caravaggio to mind. Nevertheless, it seems very healthy for a community to open a discussion about creative endeavours and be confronted with unfinished works leaving the rest to imagination rather than gulping down ready-made culture. Good luck to the company during the next stages!