

Latest Reviews

TITUS ADRONICUS - Red Phoenix Theatre

Reviewed by David Smith

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Welcome to the scene, *Red Phoenix Theatre!* Together with *Butterfly Theatre*, this newest of Adelaide's theatre groups has begun with a very strong statement. In tackling the local premiere of this first of **Shakespeare's** tragedies, director **Michael Eustice** and his production team set themselves considerable challenges.

The villainy and bloodletting are relentless. It may have been Shakespeare's first tragedy but it is not his greatest. Much of the action is preemptory, there is often little motivation for the treachery and many characters have scant development.

Brant Eustice as Titus certainly had the gravity and nobility to carry the role of tragic hero. He played it with sufficient dramatic range, capturing both deep distress at Lavinia's suffering and dark, mad humour when needed. It was a successful dramatic decision to cast the accomplished **Tracey Walker** as Marca, replacing the male character Marcus. She had real presence, was a rare voice of reason and a clear contrast with the evil and disorder around her. **Rachel Burfield** was a sensual and arch Tamora, **Anna Bampton** evoked genuine grief and pity as Lavinia, **Matt Houston** was unnervingly smarmy, yet vulnerable, as Saturninus and **Adolphus Waylee** embodied the required strength and venom of the conniving Aaron.

While a number of other performers seemed to confuse intensity with volume, we were nonetheless drawn into a dark, gruesome and grotesque world where human frailty, revenge and violent action abounded. Overall the company successfully met the challenges. More power to them for bringing Titus to the Adelaide stage.



Matt Houston as Saturninus

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