

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – Titus Andronicus \*\*\*\*\*



Titus Andronicus is Shakespeare's bloodiest play.

At the Grand Theatre in Surgeons Hall we are transported not to Rome but to 80s England. Titus has returned from his victory over the Goths and proceeds to batter, bloody and finally execute the son of the conquered Queen of the Goths Tamora, in revenge for the deaths of his own sons. So begins the gorefest.



Dressed in steel-toed bovver boots, tattoos, and sporting skinheads, Titus and his entourage create tension and violence which is palpable and unnerving. Swords and spears are replaced with baseball bats, garden tools and flick knives. Bacchanalian revelry is replaced by swilling of lager and football chants.

Is Titus Andronicus a modern equivalent of a Quentin Tarantino movie or a reflection on the barbarity of our modern society? Scenes in the play are reminiscent of the recent footage of the Syrian rebel commander cutting out and eating the heart of a Syrian soldier.



The central scene in the play, the rape of Lavinia is brutal, unnerving and repulsive. Sudan, Nanking, Chechnya, Bosnia and countless conflicts through the ages have used rape as a tool for revenge, control, humiliation and terror. Twitter trolls are now using the threat of rape as a weapon of choice. The

dark evil wit of Aaron, Tamora's lover is reflective of some of the best one-liners from Tarantino in the midst of the gore. The crazed strutting Titus brings to mind the boover boy character made famous by Dick Emery.

Leaving the theatre you are relieved that the play is finally over, exhausted and exhilarated. A brilliant production. Go see it. \*\*\*\*\*

Submitted by [Mart McAdam](#)