

Theatre review: The Attic Collective perform War In America – Former Royal High School



Our rating ***.5

'It's times like this I really wished I'd listened to what my Mother said!' What did she say? 'I don't really know, I wasn't listening!' Counter-intuitively, Galactic hitch-hiker, Arthur Dent's anecdotal bromide reinforces what TAC do – stir things up, unsettle sleeping ghosts, rattle monolithic chains, be cheeky pups widdling on the steps of the sanctum, blow wind to caution: give them enough rope just to see them well hung.



The first in their 2017 three play repertoire earlier this year, Lysistrata, was a flexible interpretation of Aristophanes' bawdy satire portraying the women of Athens and Sparta on sex strike. A Carry On Peloponnesian Wars & Whores with very big knobs on/off if you please. Last night's premiere of Jo Clifford's battery-acid splattering political satire compliments TAC's Chorus of the Crude's swinging dick, Machiavellian slick, manipulative schtick with purile panache. For the reasonably offended, the toiletry fetish scenes might seem an Alan Partridge interview car-crash vulgar vignette come much too true.

There are few enough plot-spoilers to be forewarned of, though both cast and audience might be better for knowing it, not that it matters – its narrative Ark brays with cannibalistic,

discomforted creatures confused. A great deal of harrumph and, not quite closed doors compromised behinds, occupy a considerable part of the proceedings reaffirming The Attic Collective's ever proctal odyssey into the bowels of laughter, Politico, amoral shitskrieg Mr Fox (Andrew Cameron) is a manipulative, spin-shyster nightmare in full-on, fetish faux pants on fire, Malcom Tucker mode.



He schemes to eviserate the Priministerial ambitions of 'She' (Saskia Ashdown). She has problems enough what with her conspiracy denial regarding her husband/daughters' plane-crash deaths. How can you deny a conspiracy when you do not have the proof of your own doubts? Kirsty Punton's aptly named Ms. Warp is the PA advisor enough to make even Satan blush. If she found a good day to bury bad news in a charnel house she would use the skulls for punctuation. The audience adore her.

Meanwhile, in the Palace Of Reason, the sepulchral Wisden (John Spilsbury) forgotten flotsam of a once noble, now nominal decaying debating chamber is confronted by a post-colonial ghost. And there is war in America as Christian extremists, in an atypical, ungodly act for those of a supernatural persuasion, destroy a principal city. A peripheral incident it seems, given the play's USP? But, yet again, Mr. Fox is preoccupied with his own wartime evacuations.



With the banality of meta-media fake news and structured reality witnessing Orwell's double-think and J.G.Ballard's psychosis of the pummelled mind already come true, perhaps Jo Clifford's (1996 originally written) dystopian sleeping time-bomb is ticking one second ever closer to doomsday midnight.

The Attic Collective's damnably serendipitous knack for being in the righteous place stirring up hypocritical slime at the right time is disgustingly serendipitous.

Director, Susan Worsfold/Creative Producer, Cat Sheridan, now have to fix these buckaroo aspirational enfant terribles' minds on September's Threepenny Opera. Good luck with that one.

Should be a brilliant Brechtian nightmare come true.

Photos courtesy of Greg Macvean

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