

Fleetwood Macbeth

Troubadour Theater Company at the Falcon Theatre

Reviewed by David C. Nichols
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Photo by Chelsea Sutton

satirical methodology to a rib-tickling sticking place.

Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane with big fake feet, clarion Stevie Nicks covers, and a weirdly apt bipolarity in the Troubadour Theater Company's face-off between Shakespeare's dark Scottish tragedy and the songs of Fleetwood Mac. The production has faults, but they register only between the audience's bouts of helpless laughter, as the ensemble marries Shakespeare to pop/rock sizzle, commedia zeal, circus frivolity, comedy-club spontaneity, and musical theater pizzazz. Director-auteur Matt Walker and his fulsome colleagues screw source material and

There's a relatively spare songbook on tap— "Never Going Back Again" as brief vamp only?—but it's certainly performed to the limp-sword hilt, knowingly stewarded by Walker; musical director Eric Heinly; and choreographers Nadine Ellis, Christine Lakin, and Monica Schneider. Morgan Rusler brings a priceless, near-Pythonesque deadpan to Macbeth, whose trek from Thane of Silverlake to Thane of Universal City peaks with a house-silencing, wholly sober "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" speech. Similarly, Lisa Valenzuela's titanium vocals and seriocomic discipline make her take on Lady Macbeth, "queen of all drama queens," a personal-best performance.

Walker has an antic blast as Banquo, pre- and post-ghostliness. Rob Nagle galumphs with precision as King Duncan—you've heard of his doughnuts. Jason Turner goes for understated broke as Macduff and his miniature offspring. Evan Arnold's Ross and Andy Lopez's Lennox make mincemeat of every opportunity—and they are legion. Joseph Keane's fey, scene-stealing Malcolm, like his fellow faux-Scots, wears those big pedal extremities, roller-feet in the case of Brandon Breault's Seyton—"It's pronounced Satan."

The expanded coven of witches—"I'm Witch Hazel, and I'm astringent" "I'm Erin

Brockawitch, and I've blown a lot of whistles" etc.—is easily worth the show. Annalea Rawicz Arnold (who doubles as the wild-eyed Lady Macduff), Heidi Brucker, Marissa Ingrasci, Erin Matthews, Tammy Minoff, Darrin Revitz, Schneider, and Jen Seifert are kinetically congealed and hermetically sealed by the irreplaceable Beth Kennedy, her Hecate a sidesplitting morph of Witchipoo and a Slinky. Romping and stomping in costumer Sharon McGunigle's kilts and shredded glitter skirts, drenched in Jeremy Pivnick's lighting, the triple-threat cast makes one forgive "Fleetwood Macbeth" its infrequent lapses—pitch-black and rainbow-wacky can only merge so far, after all—and luxuriate in its subversive gumption.

Presented by the Troubadour Theater Company at the Falcon Theatre, 4252 W. Riverside Dr., Burbank. July 8–Aug. 14. Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 4 & 8 p.m.; Sun., 4 p.m. (818) 955-8101. www.falcontheatre.com.