



Antaeus Company Shakespeare's Macbeth review

- by Erica White



Ian Littleworth, Brian Tichnell, Peter Van Norden

Photo by Daniel Blinkoff

The Antaeus Company has risen to the challenge, taking on the macabre play *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's shortest and bloodiest tragedy. Misguided by his ambitions, the story of *Macbeth* is one of a Scottish general and his short tenure as a tyrannical, violent and paranoid king.

Directed by Jessica Kubzansky, and featuring a fully double cast of "the Kinsmen," "the Thanes" and the random "Hurlyburlys" crew consisting of all the cast members shaken up and placed at random in the play, *Macbeth's* constantly changing cast guarantees a new and exciting twist each show.



Steve Hofvendahl, Brian Tichnell, Joe Delafield (center, obscured), James Sutorius, John Sloan

Photo by Daniel Blinkoff

Kubzansky adds her own analysis to *Macbeth's* fall from general beloved by his king and countrymen to ruthless murderer. As a prequel to Act One, Kubzansky's *Macbeth* opens to a dense fog as the

Macbeths make their way down stage to a barely visible coffin. In her arms Lady *Macbeth* (Ann Noble) holds an infant whom she begrudgingly places in the coffin and is then dragged away by mourners while screami

ng hysterically. No longer needed as a pillar for his distraught wife, *Macbeth* (Bo Foxworth) collapses beside the coffin and grieves for his lost child. The play then starts in the traditional fashion.

This bold emotional depiction of *Macbeth* as a grieving father with nothing left, shifts the play's

dynamics and the audience is left to decide if they should pity Macbeth or view him as inherently evil, a question not easily answered in this context.

The intimate settings of the Antaeus theatre, draws the audience into Macbeth's rapid decline into hallucinations by using the narrow passage between the rows of seats as an entrance and exit for characters. Jarring scenes, such as the apparition of Banquo during Macbeth's visit with the weird sisters, are made all the more eerie with Banquo silently moving towards the stage from the audience.



Elizabeth Swain, Fran Bennett, Susan Boyd Joyce

Photo by Daniel Blinkoff

Foxworth is forceful and manic as Macbeth. His descent into madness is organic and so gradual adding to the complexity Kubzansky has weaved. Noble's Lady Macbeth is twitchy and unsympathetic to her husband's initial hesitations. At times Noble's whole body contorts as her guilt begins to cripple her, the onstage transformation of the two Macbeths is breathtaking.



Adam Meyer and Bo Foxworth

Photo by Daniel Blinkoff

Joe Holt as Banquo is an unexpected surprise and delightfully seamless. Peter Van Norden as the kind and humble King Duncan later reincarnated as Macbeth's servant Seyton, whether an intentional act by Kubzansky, is brilliant as Duncan and comical as Seyton.

Sparse set design aid along with dampen lighting, further add to the dreariness that is Macbeth's futile attempts at glory.

"Macbeth" runs through Aug. 26 at The Antaeus

Company, 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood. Performances are Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. with talk-backs following Thursday night performances. Tickets are \$30 for Thursday and Friday and \$34 for Saturday and Sunday. To order call 818.506.1983 or go online to www.antaeus.org Join on Facebook at www.facebook.com/antaeustheater and follow on Twitter @AntaeusTheater

Also fans of classic theatre might be interested in Antaeus Company's ClassicsFest: Six Classics in Six Weeks running July 22-August 27. Admission is Free with a \$10 suggested donation at the door.

LifeInLA / WCCP
<http://lifeinla.com/>