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Edinburgh 2007

Change: The Upcoming War with Iran



Venue:

Assembly

Low Down

A senior US policy adviser is losing his wife and he struggles with his logic and his conscience. A profound political and personal conflict.

Review

The better the show, the more difficult to review: reviewing "Change" is almost an impertinence and is indeed a challenge. This significant play is written by Mark Soper, impeccably performed by Jack Klaff, Valerie Kutko, Jouda Echouafni, Martin McDougall and Angus MacInnes and directed with consummate skill by Gordon Carver.

An egg-head political analyst (a towering and thoughtful performance by Jack Klaff whose dilemma is palpable) is driven to endorse the practical and hideous conclusions of his own logic. The complex relationship with the US Administration, in which the struggle between his logic and his conscience places him, is paralleled in the complexities of his own marriage to Margery played by Valerie Cutko, turning in a performance which expresses both intellectual strength and emotional vulnerability in the most touching way.

The physical climax was brutal and shocking both in its political and marital context. The irresistible manipulation of the Administration in the person of Jack; Angus MacInnes, displaying marvellously underplayed yet ogreish ruthlessness. Bob is further torn apart by the passionate arguments and physical temptation of Manna, the beautiful and Westernised Irani - given a most persuasive performance by Houda Echouafni - and Mark, the political aide sent in to observe and turn the screw. And screw

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Mark does with unflappable charm and no flicker of conscience.

His impression of George W.Bush in an extended interview with Bob is uncanny and anyone passing by the theatre at this moment would be forgiven for thinking that the Texan leader of oily consumerism himself had dropped in. (After all he found time to go to Sedgefield).

The writing of this play was of the highest order and the complexity of the argument and the human emotions were laid bare with spare clarity, subtlety, and power. (I kept think of Dr David Kelly – though his dilemma was not the same - and the black evil that surely lurks to be uncovered behind his supposed suicide: would that Mark Soper might point his pen in this direction next time). CHANGE: THE UPCOMMING WAR WITH IRAN deserves the widest possible audience.

Reviewed by RF 22.08.07

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