

unggt Teaterblod

Review: Look Back in Anger by John Osborne, Krudttønden. (That Theatre Company)

By Line Weien Hoffmann

Look Back in Anger is a heart-breaking play about failure, pain, alienation and hopelessness. That Theatre Company present acting of the highest quality and elegantly manages to explore dark themes with great precision and contemporary relevance.

In John Osborne's piece about love across the class divide, the characters in this piece all experience pain and incompatibility and are plagued by the 1950s heavy class structure that was/is England. The main character Jimmy Porter looks back on his past with great bitterness as he cannot find the motivation, or reason to look to the future.

Look Back in Anger is a great classic of modern English theatre and with this play Osborne introduced a new mode of expression for strong passions and extreme emotions on stage. The play also sparked a new movement; "*The Angry Young Men*," a term used to describe young working class writers who disillusioned with traditional English society and who engaged their work with this in mind.

In Look Back in Anger, the audience is provoked and indignant by the characters behavior. It is provocative to see Jimmy shouting and screaming for change and revolution while directly disgusting those he loves most; and it is provocative to see how his wife, Alison, and best friend, Cliff, just seem to calmly accept his insults without challenging him, before it eventually becomes too much for both of them.

However, it slowly becomes more and more apparent that oppression and serious inferiority complexes underlie their behavior.

That Theatre Company's ensemble all deliver fantastic performances, but in particular it is Søren Højen who shines in the central role of Jimmy Porter, "the young angry man". Højen's performance is fabulous, as he spits and bursts with viciousness mainly directed at his wife and his mother and father in-law. At the same time he gradually manages to let the audience see more and more of Jimmy's tormented soul underneath the anger. Søren Højen conveys both the hateful and the vicious, but also his hopelessness and his breakdowns with great conviction. He manages to make the

audience hate him, but at the same time sympathize with him, which is a great achievement.

I was surprised that the classic naturalistic style, which is rarely experienced in its pure form in today's Denmark, where the stage was decorated as a lifelike living room with furniture, a functional door, etc., and that a story where the gender roles and society although so traditional, could feel so relevant. Although class differences are not something young Danish generation are aware of, the feeling of strangeness and hopelessness in relation to the future is something most people can relate to and That Theatre Company managed to highlight with grace and elegance.

Young Danish actors play the four main characters, but it takes place in its original language: English. This works incredibly well and it was surprising reading the program to find that the actors were not actually British, as their English sounded so natural. The language was easily understandable. I imagine that even audiences who are not so strong in English will be impressed and entertained as the actors are excellent at conveying the different moods, emotions and situations through both tone of voice, body language and mimicry.

That Theatre Company has chosen exactly the right time to stage *Look Back in Anger* as we look at the divided younger generation in England is facing with the worry of Brexit. Upheavals like this often makes people look back and to romanticize the past as they are not happy with the prospects for their future: just like the characters in *Look Back in Anger* do.

Look Back in Anger can be recommended to anyone who wants to be moved, provoked and impressed by magnificent naturalistic piece of classical theatre.

Medvirkende: Søren Højen, Peter Vinding, Alex Jespersen, Helle Kristiansen og Ian Burns

Dramatiker: John Osborne

Bearbejdelse og instruktion: Helen Parry

Iscenesætter: That Theatre Company

Scenograf: The TTC Team

Varighed: Ca. 2 timer og 20 min inkl. pause