

REVIEWS

Theatre

Cabin Pressure, Royal Lyceum
Robert Thomson

28/08/00

OH the responsibility! If you thought that being an audience member was the passive role in a theatre, New York's SITI Company demonstrates a rather more symbiotic relationship in "cabin pressure", a stylish, shard-like deconstruction of the theatre's proscenium arch: the supposed barrier that separates those who do, from those who get done (so to speak).

Programmes wave furiously in front of faces as we feel the heat of that spotlight turned on us. It is also a celebration, however, which relishes as much as subverts theatre's shared conventions, requires as much as explodes audience preconceptions. Conceived and directed by Anne Bogart, SITI's artistic director, and created and written by the company, the production brings together snippets from audience interviews (inarticulate in the main, emotive rather than analytical) with fragments from plays addressing the relationship under investigation: everything from Shakespeare to Noel Coward to Agatha Christie – full appreciation again necessitating a degree of theatrical knowledge.

It is a layered elliptical piece – many little ellipses, in fact – that is slick and intelligent, though I do wonder as I look around my fellow audience members whether we are an interesting enough collective to sustain 90 minutes.

The gilded glory that is the Lyceum's pros-arch remains impressed though firmly in place, and with what almost amounts to a splendid showbiz ending – the physicality, the scraps of language, the expressive music building to a dramatic climax – SITI demonstrates that, when it comes to an audience, for all that it reflects, abstracts, and deconstructs, ultimately it also manipulates as sure-footedly as the best of them.



MENU MASTERS: Will Bond as Yoshi, Kelly Maurer as Rozanne, and Barney O'Hanlon as Eddie in Cabin Pressure

Picture: GORDON TERRIS



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