

Five Women Wearing the Same Dress

Fri 3rd – Sat 18th August 2018

TIME OF THE NEXT PERFORMANCE: 20:20

VENUE: **The Space on the Mile**



REVIEWS



Tamzin Kerslake

at 09:21 on 12th Aug 2018

★★★★★

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AGREES

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DISAGREES

I was apprehensive at first when I found I was to be reviewing 'Five Woman Wearing the Same Dress'. Whilst I had never read the play itself, a two-hour student play at the Fringe was a risky move. Furthermore, from past experience, the idea of a play celebrating how women 'empower themselves' penned by a white male in the 90s, was daunting. Yet my prejudice was soon proven wrong as five intelligent and fierce women swept me along. This "wickedly funny" script follows the stories of five very different bridesmaids at a wedding reception in Tennessee. Brought together by a distaste for the bride in question and a wonderfully hideous pink bridesmaid design – a huge congratulations to the costume team for such a fluffy bubble gum disaster – they start to share a not-quite-sisterly bond.

Their ideals and ways to change the world were slightly underwhelming, with none truly sparking a revolution within me, yet this is partly to do with a dated script very much placed in its own window of place and time. However, that is not to say it is outdated entirely. The characters, as sometimes expected from ensemble work, walk the lines of different stereotypes, much like the emotions within 'Inside Out'. They are not fully rounded in the writing, yet as the play develops you unveil a history easily recognisable; the issues they face can still be relatable to the modern woman. Debating sexual experiences and religious practice, these six incredibly talented performers work hard to create a slick, engaging, and upbeat production.

Abby McCann acts predominantly as the comic, and she does it so brilliantly as the devout Christian. The part of obnoxious worshipper is almost a parody, yet she slowly learns to let herself enjoy the time she has. Lucy McGillorm and Pheobe Mallinson work very well as two driving parts to the play: both energetic and engaging, their polished performances never faltered. Their parts of rebellious youth and suffocated wife did not go by unchallenged, and it was through their confrontation that I grew to love them more.

However, it is for Trisha and Mindy (Lara Marks and Lucia Procto-Bonbright) that I hold the most praise. Their characters are seemingly the most relatable (although that may be a reflection of myself). My praise is for their sensitive and mature way that they dealt with the most emotional part of the play (no spoilers). Lara Marks as both director and performer crafted a powerful scene of recognition, never once being too melodramatic, and the accuracy of the experience hit me hard.

A nod must also be given to Hasan Al-Habib, whose portrayal of the cousin and love interest (not to the same woman), Tripp, was charming. A wonderful counter-part to Marks as they bounced off each other. Although only a cameo, I would have loved to have seen this character more.

Whilst I personally prefer shorter performances in Edinburgh, if I did see this show advertised in a different environment then I would surely go again. Talented, energetic and thoroughly enjoyable, this cast and crew have revived this play and brought it successfully to the modern audience.



Andrew Jameson

at 10:08 on 12th Aug 2018

★★★★★

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AGREES

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DISAGREES

'Five Women Wearing The Same Dress' is set during a wedding reception and focuses on the five bridesmaids seeking refuge from the reception, and from Tracy Marlowe-McClure - the hated bride. Over the course of the play they come and go, laugh and gossip, and also uncover dark secrets.

The characters are handled masterfully: each is introduced in a naturalistic style that allows the play to flow seamlessly between varying situations and conversations. I particularly enjoyed Mindy's brash entrance during a quiet moment, before she realises that this is probably a bad time and backs off the stage.

The dynamics between the characters are very naturalistically captured. The divisions were effectively depicted and Frances' awkward exclusion from the others worked well. These tensions are nicely brought to a head and resolved; in particular, Trisha's outburst towards Frances was well executed and an interesting development in their relationship.

There is some sparkling humour dotted throughout, such as when Trisha and Frances discuss whether there will be "any liquor in heaven". However, alongside this witty dialogue is a darker note with more substance. One revelation is particularly shocking, and forces the characters to change their tones and how they interact with one another. There are also some interesting reflections on marriage, with Mindy commenting that women should be allowed to "just be women for a change."

This delicate blend of humour and seriousness is masterfully pieced together by a strong ensemble cast, with the actresses and the actor all putting in great performances to form a unified collective. Trisha, played by Lara Marks, particularly excels at crossing between conversations, offering advice and confidence, while also suggesting an underlying weariness in her character.

The play has a strong visual style: the bridesmaid's garish dresses succinctly establish the tone of artificial sweetness in which the play is set. The occasional use of music is also nicely paired with the dialogue.

I thought there were some moments when the narrative felt a little slow. This was not helped by occasional repetitive humour. The joke about Frances being a proper Christian woman started to feel a little tired and two-dimensional after a while. That being said, this characteristic did allow for some nice development for Frances later in the play which I enjoyed.

'Five Women Wearing The Same Dress' perfectly captures the easy ebb and flow of conversation, featuring both the humorous highs and the darker lows. The story is delivered expertly by a strong cast which creates a fun and engaging production.

AGREE

DISAGREE

Audience Avg.★★★★★

0 votes, 0 comments



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