

Thought-provoking and emotive, *Just Before Sunrise* created an atmosphere that captured every single member of the audience. The play follows the relationship between two opposites, June, a pragmatic dancer and Bruce, a more sentimental, wonderfully awkward astronomer, who happen to meet and fall in love at university. We witness their romance, their arguments and their struggle to find a meaning in life in a mere glimpse at the beginning and the end of their life together.

The simple set encapsulated all the different aspects of the play; love, the passing of time and the friction between science and emotion, combined with just enough wit. With a heavily decorated blackboard covered with Bruce’s equations and June’s ‘wish list’, subtle sound and lighting, the directors produced a show which radiated a moving authenticity. Max Kirk’s script combined the mannerisms and jargon of the modern day to create witty and engaging exchanges, which question both relationships and our place in the world. Contrasted excellently with the slower, more passive speech of the elderly, Kirk still managed to create dialogue that, in a typically British fashion, leaves many emotions suggested, but left unspoken. Perhaps the script’s greatest achievement was the continuous parallel drawn between the lovers at the beginning and the end of their relationship; a complex element which was effortlessly pulled off by all the actors, as they created an undeniable symmetry representing the same characters at two different ages.

Young Bruce (Jonas Moore) was charmingly awkward, the character’s social clumsiness and twitching movements offset by his accidental humour. A perfect reflection of the restlessness of youth, his fascination with the intangible solar system and his discovery of unexpected love help portray a character whose self-absorption comes to discover a world outside his own academic ambitions. Harry Trewaldyn’s performance as Old Bruce, on the other hand, was fighting the passing of time and his own decline, forgetting his life with June whilst remembering his life studying the stars. He portrayed an old man with a stubborn sparkle of youth who claims a majority of the comic lines, creating together with Moore a very affable character.

Young June (Jude Mack) is altogether more mysterious, holding back her feelings to create a character who appears to always be slightly out of reach. Mack brilliantly combines this shy reluctance with the distinctive disgust of youth and a contradictory passion for life, as we see through her secretive love of dance and adventure. The elder June (Bryher Flanders) depicts how this hesitancy turns her into a more decisive but gentler woman; Flanders’ well-mastered tone of voice and more rigid body language contrasting with the fluid, graceful movements of her youth.

Together, June and Bruce show the eternal conflict between love and the pursuit one’s dreams, as we witness the birth of their ambitions in youth and their reluctance to relinquish them in old age. In short, the whole audience was left in amazement, with one such reviewer left quite simply in complete bewilderment as to how to do justice to such a poignant performance.


★★★★★

Kate Nicholson, Reviewer.


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