

Theatre Review: Thief of Time – Glam Adelaide



Tony Cockington as Mr. Soak/Kaos; Hugh O'Connor as Death; and Priscilla Thomas as Lady LeJean in Unseen Theatre Co's Thief of Time

Presented by Unseen Theatre Company

Reviewed 24 May 2014

Sir Terry Pratchett is one of those authors that everyone should read at least one or forty, times. His Discworld series of novels is beloved around the world for its quirky, British take on the fantasy genre. Adelaide's own Unseen Theatre Company is as obsessed with Pratchett's works as the rest of the world and so they return with yet another Discworld play, Thief of Time, adapted and directed by Pamela Munt.

The end of the world is coming, because soon a clock will be created which can tell time to such a precise degree that it will end time itself. The Auditors, a mysterious collective of beings, want this to happen. For them it would make things a lot simpler (and probably clear up a lot of paper work), but in general the consensus is that the apocalypse would be a bad thing. Lobsang Ludd (Leighton James) and Lu-Tze (Philip Lineton), part of the order of History Monks must travel to the city of Ankh-Morpork and stop this from happening.

This production is packed to the brim with interesting and hilarious characters, with many of Pratchett's staple characters. Of course, Death (Hugh O'Connor) gets involved, as does his granddaughter Susan (Amelia Lorien), along with the other three horsemen of the apocalypse (Lewis Baker, Daniel McInnes, Samuel Creighton) and Mr Soak the Milkman (Tony Cockington). The cast is marvellous, and everyone pulls off their respective parts nicely. Lineton as Lu-Tze seems like he's been pulled directly from a Pratchett novel, and O'Connor's rendition of Death is spectacularly commanding. The Four Horseman (and the Milkman) are also stand-outs, even though they have relatively little time on stage. War's facial hair deserves a special mention.

Despite its awesome cast, I'm afraid this performance didn't really hit the mark. The use of screen projections as a way of narrating (Melaine Lyons acting as the voice of Pratchett's footnotes) is interesting, but failed to 'wow' because of poor sound and video quality; and while having smoke machines going off can create a real spooky atmosphere, in such a small place it becomes more of a distraction. I think the play would be a lot more effective and engaging if it simply opened on actors instead of video, and perhaps had a narrator on stage. A bit more atmospheric music would also help the performance greatly as, although Death is scary enough as he is, he'd be all the more scarier if he had the right backing track.

As a relatively small-scale piece, Thief of Time, does well with what it's got. The costuming is superb, eccentric yet simple, and the lighting is effective. Props are utilised well, although some of the bigger pieces prove a bit of a hassle in between scenes. Probably the coolest bit of the performance, without giving too much away, involves a flaming sword!

Despite its flaws, Thief of Time is quaint and charming in its own way, and ultimately very amusing (which is, of course, the main goal!)

Reviewed by James Rudd