



Adaptation brings updated version of Shakespeare classic

Brian Paulette and KC Rep



By Bob Evans

“Antony and Cleopatra” by William Shakespeare received an updated adaption by Christopher Chen and continues now at UMKC in a workshop format through May 14.

A severe thunderstorm on Wed. May 10 left parts of the UMKC campus without power, and thereby caused the cancellation of the opening night performance. “The show must go on” does not apply when that are no lights, microphones, etc for performers and audience members. Opening night jitters and anxiety were delayed until May 11 at 7:30. The adaption runs about two hours with a short intermission.

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According to program notes the show is a workshop production and adapted from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Playon! Commissioning program. The show features stripped down sets similar to Shakespeare productions in England, but does rely on costumes and some set pieces and some very modern enhancements. The story line remains in form as one of the most celebrated love stories of all time, with treachery and expected twists,

This updated production used projection as a side enhancement, some well-designed lighting, a functional, nice set design to assist with changing scenes. Some of the changes just did not fit, but the show is in workshop and updated. Bothersome were glass beer bottles in one scene and the use of a rifle and handgun toward the end. They just seemed to break the theme. Another part that raised concern was the use of modern day dialogue that elicited laughs in more serious scenes. Sometimes that worked, other times it was an interruption.

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The strength of the production was the acting by the UMKC student performers. Shakespeare is not an easy undertaking,

yet they managed to do a great job with difficult dialogue.

The strongest performances came from Chioma Anyanwu, Ken Sandberg, Amy Billroth-MacClurg, and Heather Michelle Lawler.

The production was directed by Jason Bohon and featured the acting skills of: Chioma Anyanwu as Cleopatra; Amy Billroth-MacLurg as Caesar; Heather Michelle Lawler as Iras/Octavia/Canidius; Jay Love as Agrippa/Thidius/Emissary; Duncan McIntyre as Lepidus/Eros; Ken Sandberg as Antony/Fight captain; Megan Sells as Enobarbus; Charlie Sillers as Charmain/Pompey; Jeannette Delaney as Female Ensemble; Josh Davidson, Male Ensemble.

The production team included: Sandra Lopes, Zack Pierson, Kyle Womelduff, Afton earp, Zoe Still, Colleen Shea, Desdemona Chiang, Taylor Smith, Glenn Linder, Andrew Steele, Hector Quintero, Lisa Tinker.

The show continues through May 14 in Spencer Theatre on the UMKC campus. The play is in conjunction with KC Rep OriginKC series. Tickets can be purchased through the KC Rep website.

Tags: UMKC Theatre, KC Rep, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Theater, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment