



Theatre Review (LA): *Macbeth* at the Antaeus Company

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Antaeus Theatre Company has given us some glorious productions over the years, including *King Lear*, *Peace in Our Time*, *Para Palas*, and *Cousin Bette* to name but a few. These plays are always double cast in order to enable the “working” actors to accept outside jobs in TV or film without worrying about whether the show will go on. This model is great for the cast yet challenging as well (the experience of seeing another actor do your part can be challenging to say the least). The ideal is that both actors (and even the director) learn from each other. The hell of it is, it cuts down rehearsal time that is already relatively short. Add to this the fact that the two casts are also mixed and matched throughout the run so no one is caught off guard if they have to sub. I am always amazed to see that this company usually pulls it off.

This is certainly the case with their latest offering, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. This superior production is directed by one of Los Angeles’s best directors, Jessica Kubzansky, who is moonlighting from her own theatre, Boston Court. I always make a point of seeing both casts because I always learn a lot both as an actor and as a reviewer, plus I get to see twice as many fine actors. The casts are called The Thanes, led by Rob Nagle and Tessa Auberjonois, and The Kinsmen, led by Bo Foxworth and Anne Noble.

These royal pairs couldn’t be more different from each other. In Nagle we see the slow destruction of “a good man,” much too full of the “milk of human kindness,” and in Auberjonois a queen torn apart as she watches her husband fall. In Foxworth and Noble we get a slightly more traditional pair, with Foxworth more driven and Noble’s destruction caused by her own participation.

The two pairs are united by an element that Kubzansky has added: the burial of their child before anything else happens. This simple act explains a lot and puts the play on a more human and understandable level. What Zubzansky has added to this play known for its brutality is some human feeling. The only trouble with this approach is that both Nagle and Foxworth get teary-eyed at the death of their respective queens. The text seems to say that their brutality has erased all humanity and left a kind of empty, cold rationale in its place (“She should have died hereafter”).

On the other hand, the advantage to this approach is that it gives Macbeth a chance to become heroic at the end when he decides to fight MacDuff (“Lay on MacDuff”). As this production ends, Macbeth throws down his weapon as if to say “Go ahead and kill me.” It is an effective choice nevertheless. Go judge for yourself, and just enjoy the fine acting and superb direction of this remarkable company. *Macbeth* will play at [The Deaf West Theatre](#) on Lankershim through August 26.