

Centenary Theatre Group (CTG), at their Chelmer Community Centre, portray Ben Elton's comedy, Popcorn. Rolling out the red carpet for a full house, CTG bring this challenging, two dimensional satire to life with over the top egos, Hollywood duplicity and sex on a stick. Clearly a fan, Rod Felsch directs a cast of nine into a surreal and vapid existence that is Ben Elton's imagination of all things American.

Bruce Delamitri (Gary Klinger) is nominated for an Oscar for his larger than life, rock your socks off, killing spree extravaganza. Playing down his chances of receiving the Gong with cynical business manager Karl Brezner (Chris Vaag), he later returns from the Kodak Theatre with gold statuette in one hand and nude model ... sorry, actress Brooke Daniels (Annah Lane) in the other. Tonight is a celebration, except the two celebrity psychopath killers who have based their killing spree on Delamitri's film have decided to pay him a visit. Wayne Hudson (Stephen Quinn) and girlfriend Scout (Alice Long) create a hostage drama of their own collecting more moths to their flame in the form of Delamitri's wife, daughter and the entire country via the live TV broadcast given by a couple of unfortunate and unwilling CBS crew.

Make no mistake, this is satire that will hit you in the crotch. Drug use, coarse language and perhaps the finest strip tease I've seen on stage for a long while backed up with lots and lots of killing. It's fast paced, all the characters have an edge to them and Gary Klinger makes one hell of an asshole. In fact, his grating, whining, American dialect is so good that at the end of Act Two you just want to punch his corpse to make sure he's dead.

If you only know of Ben Elton's television credits you should get out to see this show to see what a hard hitting, pull no punches kind of writer he is. The man just doesn't like American pop culture and presents you with a cast of characters with absolutely no redeeming features at all. And it is hilarious. All the cast have it nailed, they are brash, dishonest, scary and out for number one and only number one. Ms Lane as Brooke Daniels is 'one hell of a broad' and even has some excellent one liners while bleeding slowly to death. Mr Quinn shines as the morally superior serial killer, Wayne Hudson and is backed up deliciously by the simplistically innocent Alice Long as Scout.

I would have liked more effort made in set and prop design, I wasn't completely convinced that I was looking at the latest in movie mogul design and I do question the use of lighting effects that happen in the auditorium behind the audience. It isn't necessary and only pulls my focus away from the stage. And while I'm on the fittings and furniture some serious discussion needs to be had amongst the committee about the facilities downstairs at the theatre because they are atrocious. But that is a matter for a weekend working bee.

There is some seriously good work going on, on stage at CTG this season, everyone is focused and on cue and the laughs from the audience are loud and consistent.

12 September 2009

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