Theatre Review Three Tall Women Essay, Research Paper

Edward Albee’s Three Tall Women, portrays the life of a woman (A) who overcomes numerous hardships. The entire play is set in the woman’s bedroom and the time is the present. The cast of only five, two of which have no lines, perform the play arena style.

Upon coming to see this play, I had absolutely no knowledge of the story line or playwright. With the first act, I followed the story easily, understanding the old woman was ninety-two and physically incapable of caring for herself. However, it was not her makeup or movements that ultimately led me to believe she was ninety-two years old. It was her first line, “I’m ninety-two years old ,” which gave me the hint. Her makeup made her look old, but not that old. Her hair, being dark gray as opposed to being white, perhaps contributed her younger-than-ninety-two-years-old appearance. Also, her movements were convincing at times, but lacked frailness at certain points. For instance, when she returned from the bathroom and sat on the bed, she was very able to seat herself and sit very well without any back support whereas earlier she had needed assistance as well as a pillow for her back.

The other characters, B and C, were convincing in their costumes and makeup. However, I didn’t truly understand their characters. I couldn’t tell if the nurse, B, was annoyed with the old woman or if she felt sorry for her. Character C, the lawyer, didn’t really have a defined character except that she exhibited no sympathy for the old woman. Her facial expressions were blank at times and her movements seemed awkward.

After intermission, the play resumed and this time, the old woman was apparently dead. All three characters returned, but this time, they portrayed three different stages of the old woman’s life: a young girl of twenty-six, a middle-aged woman of 52, and a much older woman. After being confused at times during the first act, I was completely baffled when the second act began. It honestly took me approximately fifteen minutes to understand the plot. The costumes truly fooled me since they all could have been from present time. The young girl looked like she had just come from a party and I believed that she was still the character of the lawyer coming to visit the old woman after hearing the news of her death. I believed the same for character B, even though she was dressed more conservatively and had some gray streaks in her hair. But when the older woman entered on stage, able to walk freely and without a broken arm, I had no idea where the story had gone. Another factor that didn’t aid me in my confusion, was the first monologue by the young girl. She was again awkward in movement, especially in her short sequenced dress. At one point, she spoke of how she stands tall while she had been slumping her shoulders the whole time.

The lighting throughout the play gave no clues to the story and basically turned on in the beginning and off at the end. There were no significant changes,

I didn’t enjoy the performance, and I didn’t really like the play itself. The story didn’t really relate to me in any aspect. I think that an older person might enjoy the story line better. I would recommend that my grandma or aunt see this play, but I would also recommend that they come to this performance knowing a little bit more about the play than I did.