

Enjoyable Production of Much Ado

Review, Spotlight Kingston, August 27, 2012

“Much Ado about Nothing” now being staged in City Park is a most enjoyable way to spend the afternoon. Impromptu Productions has set this Shakespeare comedy in a setting perfect to enjoy the words and performance.

City Park, being one of the largest green spaces in the city, could have very much overwhelmed this performance. That was not the case with “Much Ado about Nothing,” in fact it felt very much like an intimate theatre space. And with strong performances from this cast it was most enjoyable.

Impromptu’s use of the surroundings and minimal set pieces (two benches) helped maintain the focus on the story and the words. The choice of Colonial era costumes lent itself perfectly to the Limestone City. The vivid costume colors set against the natural background was also a great choice. And under the natural light of late afternoon the stage came to life.

With any Shakespeare play the clarity of speech and the true understanding by the actor of what is being said can make or break the performance for me. Many times Shakespeare is just spoken and not performed. This is NOT the case with “Much Ado about Nothing”.

The cast for the most part was strong from top to bottom. The work of Matt Davis as Leonato stood out for me. He showed great range and conviction. Catherine Owsik as Hero and Reese Presley gave strong performances.

The most enjoyable scenes for me included Renata Colwell (Borachio) & Susan Brown (Conade). Adam Holroyd very nearly stole the show with his performance of Dogberry.

Impromptu Productions has only planned one weekend for “Much Ado”; don’t miss it. The opening night was well attended; in fact there were more than I have seen at some more established theatres in the City. Here’s hoping Impromptu brings Shakespeare back to the Park soon.

3 ½ stars of 5