



Speaking in Tongues: Unique. Complex. Brilliant.



Theatre appeals to a very niche audience, those who truly appreciate the art of live performance. Performing on stage is not an easy task and *Speaking In Tongues* takes “not easy” to a very different level.

Speaking In Tongues is a contemporary classic written by Australian writer Andrew Bovell. It follows the story of four marriages, each relationship strained with complexities. As each character tries to find fulfillment, they all plunge into a dark hole of sex, lies and neglect, climaxing when a woman goes missing. The play is written for four actors, who play a minimum of two characters for a total of nine. This play was first adapted in 1996, opening to critical acclaim and winning the 1997 AWGIE Award in the process.

Philip RiccioNow Toronto audiences get a taste of Bovell’s work thanks to The Company Theatre. Directed by the theatre’s co-Founder & Artistic Director, Philip Riccio, what you are presented with is a theatre experience like none other. On paper, there is a lot that can go wrong with this production. From reading the narrative alone, you cannot fully visualize the production but what you see on stage will simply blow your mind.

The narrative is quite complex. Broken into three, each section features characters that overlap with one another. You are presented with two conversations, both in different settings contextually, but in the same place on stage. Similar dialogues overlap, bridging the two conversations. Its a beautiful mental adventure where you are a constantly engaged with the production. There are times where you feel the narrative could have sped up, but those moments were required to make the next segment of the narrative work. It puts you in a position where you, as

the audience member, must do more to keep up & understand whats going on. Its a brilliant experience, not seen in very many productions these days.

Richard Clarkin, Yanna McIntosh, Jonathan Goad & Helene Joy - The Company Theatre’s *SPEAKING IN TONGUES* Brilliant dialogue cannot be fulfilled if you don’t have a motivated cast to pull it off. The four artists – Richard Clarkin, Yanna McIntosh, Helene Joy & Jonathan Goad – are just spectacular. The depth and emotion within conversation can clearly be felt, creating an emotional connection between the characters and the audience. It is quite a treat to see the chemistry between the artists. They are always in sync with one another, especially when the narrative becomes more complicated and begins to overlap. Riccio has done a fine job in creating a simple direction, with which the artists simply refine and deliver brilliantly.

Everything about this production revolves back to the characters. John Thompson’s very subtle set design & brilliant use of lighting reduces the distractions & puts the spotlight on the characters, allowing audience members to really focus on the drama that unfolds between them. The music is not over the top, the dramatic moments are limited to when they are required and the use emotion is well-balanced.

Riccio has done a fine job putting together a theatrical piece that many in the industry would hesitate to attempt. Its not your typical theatre, but The Company Theatre is not your typical production company either. When Allan Hawco and Philip Riccio put the company together in 2004, they aimed to provide a unique and fulfilling experience to audiences everywhere. *Speaking In Tongues* is a quintessential example of that goal.