



Treasure Island Review –April 2020

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The National Theatre's production of *Treasure Island*, based on Robert Louis Stephenson's adventure novel, adapted for the stage by Bryony Lavery, is a treat for all lovers of theatre. The staging is visionary and awe inspiring, from a simple inn, to a hulking ship that emerges from the depths, complete with sails and rigging, a beautiful night's sky that is full of identifiable constellations and an atmospheric revolving island that is alive with heaving "pimples". This masterpiece of set design was created by Lizzie Clachan and her creative team is by far the star of the show, establishing setting and mood throughout.

This adaptation of the classic tale of Jim Hawkins' coming of age adventure story, directed by Polly Findlay is given a gender shake up, accurately representing the historical fact that women did indeed go to sea and would have been some of the most violent and feared pirates of the time. This change to the original story was not heralded or lingered upon and as a result did not cause any loss of belief in the events that impacted our young hero. This was a comedic version of the story which was fast paced and included physical comedy, word play, stock characters and a small dabbling with comedy illusions.

Jim Hawkins was confidently played by Patsy Ferran who delivered an endearing performance allowing us to root for her, throughout. She carried the whole show confidently and with energy and wide eyed naivety of a young person who first endeavours to navigate the world, growing her character as she encounters the disappointments of life and the dangers along her journey.

Another highlight of the show was the performance of Long John Silver by Arthur Darvill which was not the caricature of a pirate that we are all familiar with, but a representation of a sociopathic manipulator who will go to any lengths to achieve their goal, however nice they have to be. Not representing him as a cold blooded character allows the younger audience members to pick up on the underlying themes of trust and betrayal. Working alongside Silver was the animatronic parrot, which was used for very clever interactions with the ensemble, giving a fully rounded experience of the character and the story.

If you are looking for a show that is full of energy, fast paced and thrilling you won't go wrong with this show, it's highly recommended for families with children who are 10+ and those looking for a unique telling of a timeless story of excitement, navigating the perils of growing up and adventure.

Miss Hannah Morris (Drama)