

## “STOMP OUT LOUD” THEATRE REVIEW

“Stomp Out Loud” is a musical production. It combines elements of physical movements, musicality, rhythm and pace to bring you the stunning performance of “Stomp Out Loud”. The unique musicality and movement of Stomp lies in the range of everyday objects it employs to achieve its effects: this is a show that finds sound in manipulating everything from broomsticks to matchboxes, toilet plungers to plastic carrier bags, cigarette lighters to water cooler containers

This play is almost entirely based on physical movements, but the director cleverly uses techniques such as contrasts in atmosphere and setting. For example, certain scenes would be given a more sinister feel to it, by use of lighting, sound and props. “Stomp Out Loud” has no fixed setting, but instead it uses several different settings and many of them are linked in one way or another (the kitchen following into the water phonics scene through the drainage system). It is music and dance and performance. It has characters and a theme, though no cohesive plot. There are no words spoken throughout the show, though grunts and body sounds contribute. Within each "scene" there is a bit of a story. The main idea, however, is that a group of people (or just one individual) are wondering, “How could I make music from this?”. They try, and succeed. As they succeed, more and more people start joining in, building in pace and rhythm and before you realise it, they have created a full orchestra with that single prop. The objects change, the pitch and rhythm change, the style changes a bit, we get to know the characters' personalities a bit more. It is very subtle, but it is noticeable from these changes. The changes in pace of music helped build tension and kept us, the audience, on the edges of our seats.

Movement was essential to the play. They would be nowhere as near as successful if they just had the music but no movement. The movement added life, as well as a “story” to the performance, as I had mentioned earlier. The choreography of the performance was excellent. These highly-skilled performers managed to pull off extremely confusing and complex manoeuvres whilst at the same time, keeping their pace and rhythm. Timing was especially important, as one mistake could lead to disaster. Characters were suspended on sky-high billboards, to waist-deep in sewer water.

Lighting and sound were used extremely effectively throughout the performance. There were a lot of contrasts between scenes in terms of lighting and sound. Certain scenes such as the kitchen were well-lit and the music was very fast-paced and loud. On the other hand, a scene such as “water phonics” was set in a very dimly-lit area, and the music was a lot slower and softer.

Costumes and props were not essential to the play, but the props helped to create an atmosphere, and give the audience a clearer understanding of where the scene was “set”. Costumes were very plain, but this did not matter as it did not affect the quality of the play in any means.



All the scenes in “Stomp Out Loud” were exceptionally good, but the four I shall be evaluating are : “The Kitchen”, “Water Phonics”, and “Buckets”.

**“The Kitchen”.** The scene starts off in the street, and the head chef is ranting and nagging about the kids making a lot of noise downstairs. The camera zooms up on him and follows him into the kitchen, where the music begins. The head chef “controls” the rest of his crew, by giving them out tasks and he also controls the music. He decides when the music stops and continues, usually with a single clap. The rest of the cast are dressed up as chefs, with the exception of one female waiter who is taking orders. Props such as knives, plates, saucepans etc. are all used to create music. The amazing thing about this scene is that they are not making music for the sake of just making music. They are actually all performing their task while making music, for example the chef would be making music by chopping up vegetables.

There were several pauses, controlled by the head chef, and there was a noticeable build up in pace and rhythm. The scene starts off basic with a few beats and slowly builds to form a kitchen orchestra! The director chose to have bright lighting for this scene, opposed to some of the other scenes which made sense as it is not very practical to have people working in a pitch black kitchen!

The scene ends with a chef pouring water down the drain, and the camera following the water down into the drain, to the next scene, “Water Phonics”...

---

**“Water Phonics”.** This scene follows up from “The Kitchen” and starts off with very basic, single beats. The actors are plumbers, and they are “fixing” the pipes by knocking them with hammers, creating the sound. What I find clever in this scene is how they managed to create several different sounds from one prop (the pipe). They had put different amounts of water in each pipe so that each “plumber” had a unique note to play. Unlike “The Kitchen”, where there was a head chef to control the pauses, “Water Phonics” had none. They worked as an ensemble, and built up the pace of the music together. This required precise timing. There was less movement in this scene than others as they were waist-deep in water. Towards the end of this scene, it starts raining, and the plumbers take out their umbrellas. This adds a touch of humour to the scene, as the plumbers are already drenched in the sewers.

Lighting is very dim in this scene, however the plumbers have small torches and there is a green glow reflecting on the water. This gives the water that “sewer” feeling, adding to the atmosphere of this scene. The sound used in this scene is not fast-paced or loud but it is softer and eerier, adding to the mood of the scene.

---

**“Buckets”.** This scene was slightly different from the previous two. This is because “Buckets” was performed on stage. There was no real obvious setting for this scene. The “instrument” used for this scene were buckets, hence the name. However, these buckets had small screws or metal pieces attached to the sides so that when they were hit, they would make a rattling noise. This scene required a lot of technique as the whole group had to be extremely well co-ordinated, especially the part where they slide their bucket around the circle, whilst at the same time collecting the bucket that was slid towards them.

Lighting was basic in this scene, compared to others. The only forms of lighting used were the spotlights that focused on each of the cast as they performed.

Towards the end of this scene, the buckets are being passed to each other with such great speed that it is mesmerising, and as they build up to such a great speed, they suddenly come to a halt. Lights fade, and it moves on to the next scene.

---

In conclusion, I found “Stomp Out Loud” to be a highly entertaining piece of drama. It was very unique, and it is interesting to be able to watch something different now and then. The director, choreographers and not to mention the performers, all did an excellent job in producing a fine piece of drama, and I am sure that many would agree that “Stomp Out Loud” was a spectacular performance for all.

