

26/8/2022

A Many-Splendoured Thing

Theatre Ronin

EdFringeReview.com

★★★★★

If you are looking for beautifully crafted cinematic pieces at the Fringe, look no further. This is a ten-minute snapshot of tender performances, gorgeous shots and clever editing. This is the epitome of romantic, sensual and nothing even happens. Inspired by Eileen Chang's *Love in a Fallen City*, *A Many-Splendoured Thing* touches on some of its elements of a man and woman in a turbulent era in this movement piece.

The captions bring together the Hong Kong origin of the story as well as the global audience, giving accessibility to those who wish to venture into this pretty corner of the universe. These words gave us a glimpse into the main character's musings in such a poetic and digestible way. The music was lovely. Despite the emotional whirlwind the narrator has at points, the music remains calming and is a nice touch to suggest that there is calmness within the storm. It was a subtle way of showing hope, and I'm sure many people will appreciate this message.

I loved the earthy look of the space. Alex Tam is a master at creating personality through this medium. The room is like a haven of sunlight, crochet and spirit. Dreamy, but clearly grounded in the thoughts of the narrator. Beautiful. Tam's conceptual ideas in all aspects of production come to an amazing coalition. I especially loved the scene with the tragedy and comedy mask. It's such a creative and intimate way of expressing emotion. Not to mention, it's kind of disturbing looking at those masks for a long period of time so it really adds interesting contrast and makes for a complex and intriguing production.

I enjoyed it thoroughly and will definitely be trying to watch more of Tam's work. If you appreciate amazing cinematography and aesthetically impeccable work from around the world, please please please give this a watch!

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This work, directed, produced, and designed by the talent of Alex Tam is visually irresistible. Soft and delicate hues and the motif of sunlight create a tranquil opening to the play that continues throughout. The visual elements of the play have an immediate dreamlike quality, the beauty of which is matched by impressive and graceful camera work, masterful editing, and considered sound design. Visually the piece is poetry.

This poeticism extends too to the script. A softly spoken narrator recites a speech seemingly to or about her lover. Sentimental lines such as "I saw you reading a novel at the corner after lunch/ I wonder if you imagine yourself as the protagonist as you read", accompany the scene of a woman asleep on a sofa, bathed in soft sunlight.

The piece features gentle, often guitar-based music throughout, and when paired with the highly artistic style of filming and short length of the scenes (and the piece as a whole), the production style often feels similar to that of a music video. The piece is short, sweet, and creatively accomplished, no shot exists if not contributing to the overall mood of the work.

At times acting doesn't seem to match the tone of the piece, however, being harsh and exaggerated, much unlike the soft and seamless quality of the camera work and set design. At other times it succeeds. In a darker, yet equally sentimental scene, a masked woman is shown as the narrator tells of the "Summer of 1941, the edge of war", a faint ticking is heard in the background and the woman stumbles slowly back onto a sofa.

The individual components of this piece were poetic, and beautiful and proved immense talent. Though despite being moving to watch in their parts, I struggled slightly to connect the dots and engage with the piece as a whole.
