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Dystopian drama, mutant animals, notable acting—Oh my!

Posted by: [Julia Bryant](#) in [Arts](#) 6 days ago 0 Comments 139 Views

Province is a single-act play at Centaur Theatre that's sure to impress

If you've never been lost in the depths of the wild forests of Quebec, then *Province*—a new play staged at the Centaur Theatre—would have been the perfect way to feel like you were.



It's a strange, strange world the characters of *Province* inhabit. Photo by Maxime Cote.

The Quebecois play—presented by Talisman Theatre and The Other Theatre—was originally written in French by Mathieu Gosselin but was translated to English for this production. It was a hauntingly beautiful piece. It was eerily unpredictable and somewhat confusing—just what you would expect from a dystopian drama which features mutant animals.

According to the Talisman Theatre website, *Province* "explores humanity's indifference to environmental destruction and its commitment to individualism at any cost." The narrative is centred around individuals that are presented with the problem of mutant animals but still continue to live their lives concerned with entertainment and aesthetics.

Throughout the show, *Province* stirred up many unsettling questions for the audience. It challenged humanity's apathetic views towards the environment as well as the values of individuality and connecting with others. It provided a startling view of the consequences that could arise from the seemingly easy choices of modern-day life.

The play featured 10 actors, only nine of whom appeared on stage. The show was presented in a single act with no intermission and the actors were engaged in motion for the entire performance. The physical effort each put forth was very impressive.

Maintaining balance among such a large number of people onstage can certainly be a difficult task, but the cast of *Province* made it look effortless. Their transitions between scenes were almost seamless. The audience was never confused as to what the main focus was or where they should direct their attention.

Two actors in particular made an impression in this production. Éloi Archambaudoin—a graduate of the National Theatre School's acting program—portrayed the masculine and unconcerned Brandon. His character was more comic than tragic but he still brought Brandon to life with his credibility.

The second notable performance of the evening came from one of Concordia's own theatre graduates, Jennifer Roberts. She played the innocent but daring Kimmie. She portrayed her with a sense of wonder and yearning, one that many young girls can have, but she also embodied a wonderful awkwardness that got the audience on her side from the start.

The design work that went into this show was quite good but the lighting design in particular was phenomenal. Lighting designer David Perreault Ninacs is a graduate of the National Theatre School and has designed over 70 shows. It was clear that he is not only experienced in his field, but passionate about what he does. The lighting design in *Province* was captivating and often striking.

However, one downfall of the production was that the energy that the actors established at the start of the show lost steam throughout the rest of the play. This could have been caused by the non-linear narrative style of the script, or could also have been because of the actors' extreme commitment to their physical performances.

The script of *Province* was stunningly poetic. This was particularly impressive because the play was originally written in French. Despite it having being translated to English, the beauty and the morbidity of the show remained in full force.

Next up for The Other Theatre is *LOVE U LOVECRAFT* at La Chapelle Theatre in March 2016.

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