



Review: Province

YET ANOTHER DYSTOPIAN WORK

In her Director's Statement in the program of this English language premiere of the Quebec play "Province" by Mathieu Gosselin, Stacey Christodoulou places it in a pantheon of three movies wherein doom and gloom are mixed with absurdity. I think a better example is H.G. Wells's 1896 "The Island of Dr. Moreau", wherein animals are surgically transformed into humanoids and revolt against their creator.

In Province, genetic modification is the transformative tool, but the outcome of humans playing God is similar. The whole production, created jointly by the lower case the other theatre and the upper case TALISMAN theatre is some two hours long without intermission. An intermission would destroy the atmosphere of the play, so viewers should take preventative measures before being seated. "The length of an act is determined by the retentive capacity of the human bladder" as a great dramatist once proclaimed.

The critters and revengeful forces are never seen but heard, ethereally voiced off stage by Tristan D. Lalla. Lots of talented local actors in this one. Mommy (France Rolland) who has deserted her two sons, Davide Chiazese and Mike Hughes, who hide indoors while Stephanie Buxton roams the outdoors, seeking to slay monsters with sword as does Zack Fraser with fire. Comic relief is in the form of a beautiful couple, Sabrina Reeves and Eloi Archambaudoin, obsessed with their appearance, oblivious to the encroaching dangers.

Many of the Quebec plays selected by Talisman over the years feature a lot of yelling and somewhat pretentious language which is compensated by the excellent casting. One wag in the audience, noting the Shakespearean ending - lots of dead bodies - also added, from Macbeth "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". That is a bit harsh in my opinion and the play is worth visiting.

Province continues at the Centaur until October 17. Info: 514-288-3161 or Centaurtheatre.com

Buy tickets [here](#).

Images: courtesy of Maxime Côté

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