

Reviews of Macbeth Re-Arisen - Edinburgh Fringe 2006

THE LIST - 8 August 2006 - FOUR STARS ★★★★★

Macbeth Re-Arisen - Theatre

Macbeth is slain and Duncan is King, the witches prophecy is fulfilled. Or is it? Part two sees a bloodstained Macbeth supernaturally re-arisen. He resurrects his wife and they once again plot their rise to power, assisted by their zombie minions of course. Writing an entire play in Elizabethan pentameter is a risky task but David Mence's somewhat ludicrous script, seamlessly leads on from the first installment. He mixes Shakespearean verse with cheesy horror-esque conventions and creates new characters, like the gothic Hecate and the golum-like Cripple No-toes. These along with old favourites are performed by a talented cast of Aussies who handle this well balanced farce with wit and respect. This chainsaw wielding Macbeth is worth seeing!
(Greer Ogston)

Hill Street Theatre, 226 6522, until 28 Aug (not 9, 15, 16, 23),
10.40pm, £9.00 (£7.50).

THREE WEEKS - 14 August 2006 - FIVE STARS
★★★★★

Macbeth Re-Arisen

White Whale Theatre

"Macbeth is dead yet breathes this air". That's right, he's back! This wonderfully written Australian production adds the sequel to the original Macbeth. Back from the dead, zombie Macbeth and his wife lead their very own zombie army to try and prise Scotland away from the arms of King Malcolm. It's immensely funny and keeps the audience tied to their seats as they follow him on his latest quest to become king. This is an adventurous production that is pulled off perfectly by an enthusiastic and talented cast. Think Shakespeare meets 'Shaun of the Dead' and you have 'Macbeth Re-arisen'. William is probably turning in his grave; but only because he wishes he could have written it himself.

Three Weeks Rating: 5/5

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THE EDINBURGH GUIDE - THREE STARS ★★★

Reviewer Chris Mounsey.

Over his 11 years at the Fringe, your humble reviewer has seen many extraordinary sights but, you may take it for granted, he never thought that he would ever watch an undead Macbeth exhorting his zombie minions in iambic pentameter; and yet this is precisely what he has just seen.

Australian theatre group White Whale Theatre have created a real oddity; a sequel to Macbeth that makes modern day references and features a blatant homage - when evil goddess Hecate gifts a chainsaw to the undead Macbeth - to Evil Dead 2. This is really good fun and the writing is simply astounding; it sounds so like Shakespeare (right down to the rhyming scheme changes) that one is initially slightly confused as to whether it is a comedy or not. But rest assured: it is. The whole show is gloriously silly and is well-acted; not least by the wonderfully convincing disembodied hand that walks its way across the stage at the end.

So what is wrong with it? Put simply, it is too long. The show lasts almost two hours and your humble reviewer did feel his head nodding once or twice during the performance (although it had been a rather long day); this show would have been excellent had it been condensed to, say, an hour and fifteen. Further, some actors have a tendency to shout although the words are at least clear. Lady Macbeth though, was absolutely wonderful: it may be the first time that I have been attracted to a thoroughly evil, walking corpse.

THE SCOTSMAN - AUGUST 2006 - THREE STARS ★★★

SUSAN MANSFIELD

HILL STREET THEATRE (VENUE 41)

MACBETH Re-Arises takes up where Shakespeare left off. Macbeth is dead, Malcolm and Macduff are trying to rebuild the nation, but little known to them, Macbeth got something extra from the witches: the power to come back undead. Cue Macbeth meets Sean of the Dead, in B-movie schlock-horror splendour.

There is no doubt that David Mence, who wrote and directed the show for Australian company White Whale, is on to something. There are more bloody deaths in Macbeth

than in many horror films, and the walking dead play a part even in Shakespeare's original.

But the show feels poised uncomfortably between a complete send-up and something more serious. The opening half hour is quite earnest, and Macduff, in particular, who cannot forgive himself for abandoning his wife and children, is on a complex psychological journey. The play is written in pentameter, and some sections sound authentic, some pastiche and some a parody. In the second half the comedy cranks up, and by the time Hecate gives Macbeth a chainsaw we are firmly in send-up land. Mence's production is a bright idea well executed (if that's not too terrible a pun). Perhaps it is only the practicalities of the length (almost two hours) and the late starting time (10.40pm) which meant it fell slightly short of expectations.

THE PROGRAM ★★★★★

STAGE :: Macbeth ReArisen

By [Jade Gulliver](#)

VIC | 11.07.2006

Inspired by lines from the original Macbeth, writer/ director **David Mence** combined Shakespearean tragedy and B grade schlock-horror movies to create *Macbeth ReArisen*.

There have been many attempts to revamp Shakespeare in film, but **Mence** goes one step further and has written a sequel to Macbeth despite the title character dying in the original.

Macbeth, (**James Woods**) despite being beheaded in the original returns to lead a legion of zombie minions. Risen from the dead by three witches, (tremendously performed by **Alex Aldrich**, **Brooke Antulov** and **Sarah Giles**), under the direction of Hecate, (**Claire Glenn**), who has chosen Macbeth as General in her attempt to take control over the living world.

Countering the gore inspired antics of Macbeth and Hecate is the comical and very Shakespearean scenes as the new king is sought. The most engaging of which is the boy king, Fleance (**Alex McQueen**).

Macduff (**Pablo Calero**), while searching the mediatory plain for a book capable of returning Macbeth to the grave, is confronted by the ghostly apparition of Lady Macduff (**Giles**) who even in death is dissatisfied with her husband's priorities. Meanwhile Macbeth seeks a reunion with his evil Eve, Lady Macbeth (**Laura Maitland**).

Macbeth ReArisen manages to perfectly walk the line between Shakespearean and high art literary theatre and B grade horror. Between scenes loaded with high brow literary references there is plenty of cliché piano laden ghost and horror music, and red and green lighting.

The performances are fantastic lead by **Woods** and **Maitland** who are perfect as the evil Adam and Eve, and terrifically supported by entertaining and humour laden character roles, most notably **Aldrich** who has a perfect handle on her three roles and manages to stand out in all of them, and **Peter Reid** (Cripple No- Toes) who provides comic relief and prophetic messages.

The stand out scene is the final one in which Macbeth severs his own hand replacing it with a chainsaw in an attempt to further enhance his killing power, while Lady Macbeth comes to delight her role as nefarious queen of the un-dead, both are confronted by Macduff who is intent on saving the world.

Headed to Edinburgh Fringe Festival, I doubt this will be the last we hear of **David Mence** or *Macbeth ReArisen*. Then there is the immense talent of the performers all of

whom bring a believability and charisma to their roles, making even the most obscure literary reference relatable. I would say even Shakespeare himself would be impressed by this humorous, clever sequel.

***Macbeth ReArisen** played at Guild Theatre, Union House, University of Melbourne.*