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**FRINGE REVIEW: GIRL SHUT YOUR MOUTH –
BAKEHOUSE THEATRE, 2020**



Told through the collective story of four young girls, *Girl Shut Your Mouth* is, in the simplest of terms, a play about female suffering. Darcy, Grace, Mia and Katie are pretty stereotypical for their age; they squabble, they like boys, they're proud feminists. They also, however, live in a place where their friends die on the regular; where an acid attack on a friend isn't that bad considering, and where asking for a little education seems a bit much. Greedy even.

Written by playwright Gita Bezar, *Girl Shut Your Mouth* creates a unique space and set of characters to present Gita's amalgamated snapshot of collective violence against women and the impact it has on the victims. Each of the girls has been written with an adept and nuanced touch; their manner of speech and cutting witticisms ring true for the dialogue between school friends and created pangs of nostalgia for my own female high school friendships.

The actors and the director both need to be applauded in their choice of character casting and embodiment. Each actor wore their character’s traits, personalities, mannerisms and idiosyncrasies like a second skin. Even when in the sidelines or in the shadows of transitional scenes each performer remained totally focused.

Deciphering the setting of the play amidst the vague and purposefully imprecise references to the character’s surroundings was incredibly clever. By keeping the location and even time period fairly anonymous, the play has been allowed to traverse cultural boundaries-reflecting that the issue of violence against women is a universal plague that spans across continents and remains an even more pressing topic of public discourse today.

The play, however, is rated PG which feels like an understatement regarding the themes, language and sensitive subject matter. Though advertised as a dark comedy, it’s misleading to suggest that this show doesn’t have a more and very real sinister undertone. A trigger warning for the themes and their discussions/depictions of sexual violence wouldn’t be amiss. But don’t let this be too discouraging, or an excuse to miss the show. The most important messages are often the hardest to hear.

Girl Shut Your Mouth presents a new form on an old and ever important issue. An excellent performance by all and delivered in a new and engaging medium; have a glass of red beforehand and strap yourself in. This play and its themes will create an important conversation piece for months to come.

4.5/5 Stars

By Grace Kungel

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