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Level III Theatre
Hours 4/5-6/7

The Government Inspector

There is a misconception of the theater being a hoity-toity recreation that only the smart and stuck-up can enjoy. Nothing disproved this misconception like the Milwaukee REP's performance of "The Government Inspector." With crude sexual humor, that anyone who ever saw a PG-13 movie would get, energetic actions and great line delivery, "The Inspector General" was something everybody ages 13+ could enjoy. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying it was a simple play, satire done right rarely is. Certain parts of the performance did well at correctly displaying the corruption of government and poor treatment of the lower classes. The only major problem with the performance was that with the abundance of jokes, the message of the play wasn't really driven home.

Everybody likes a good joke, but there does come a time when the jokes become repetitive and too much. While I did find myself rolling in laughter for a majority of "The Inspector General," there were parts where I asked myself "When are they going to move forward?" Comedy is always a good element to have, but said comedy should be execution in a way that compliments the piece and have a purpose. Cheap jokes for the sake of cheap jokes are just for shock-value. They are there to compensate for what is lacking. "The Inspector General" would've been just fine with less blatant attempts to get an audience response and moved the plot line forward at a better pace.

Despite the shortcomings in the script, the actors of "The Inspector General" did extremely well. They committed to their roles and never broke character once. If it is true that acting funny is harder than acting serious, the cast must not have been informed. At one point in the play, the character Hlestakov, is completely sloshed and flying about onstage. It was during this scene that I forgot I was watching a play. It was as if I was in a different world and some crazy man just fainted on a bear. A script

is just words on a page without out word color and great line delivery. The actors were living their lines and not just reciting them.

Underneath all the jokes and fast movement was an important message. Corruption and politics go hand-in-hand. In order to move up the social ladder and appeal to the Czar, the characters instead reveal their corrupt ways anyway. A good hint of the society was displayed during the set changes where peasants do the work and keep things moving along much like their real life counterparts. The parts of the corrupt world of the Russian town in "The Inspector General" parallel to many societies today.

So, you throw together a lot of crude jokes and political corruption to get the script of "The Government Inspector" on the surface, because this is satire and it all has a purpose. Combine great blocking and acting with a dash of clever set changes and you've got the exciting and fun performance by the Milwaukee REP. The play definitely has it's shortcomings but there's was more good than bad. I definitely recommend others to see this play.