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## Titus Andronicus: Wonderfully Brutal



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I remembered from the school days that Titus Andronicus is Shakespeare's bloodiest, most violent play. I remembered that Lavinia had her arms chopped off, and that was about it. I forgot that she also had her tongue cut off, so was pretty shocked to see blood everywhere all of a sudden on stage last night. In the words of one critic, Titus Andronicus is a play with "14 killings, 9 of them on stage, 6 severed members, 1 rape (or 2 or 3, depending on how you count), 1 live burial, 1 case of insanity and 1 of cannibalism--an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines." Oh what a dark and bloody deed is done with this play! This is like the Shakespeare version of [Reservoir Dogs](#), but way more entertaining. (Sorry, but when

Tarantino and the Bard go at it, you know who's gonna get their ass kicked).



[Titus Andronicus](#), as presented by Mad Duck Equity Co-op is a modern interpretation of the Elizabethan play, making it more accessible. The soldiers sport fatigues and berets. Titus's sons sport styley suits. The whole play looks really good.

Director Jack Paterson pulls off this gruesome tale of revenge (and revenge of revenge) extremely well, bolstered by a crew of talented actors. That he does so is all the more to his credit, considering that this play could easily be a painful experience to sit through, were it done in that amateur style we love to hate. In the end it's still a painful experience to sit through: or at least an uncomfortable one (assuming I'm not the only one who cringes at blood-curdling screams, kicks in the head, and seeing actors get slapped).

To offset the violence, Paterson also serves up TA as being also the sauciest play I've yet witnessed on stage. Eyes penetrate, lips lock, and passion fueled by vengeful violence ensues. Who cares if this violent play isn't one of the Bard's deep moments? In Paterson's hands, the script is gripping, and frankly kicks ass.

Unfortunately, tonight is the last showing of the play at the Jericho Arts Centre. I strongly recommend you take your loved ones in to learn a lesson or two about family honour and the power of love.

William Wang