



The T-Mobile myTouch® and myTouch® Q with a Genius Button® for easy-to-use voice commands. [LEARN MORE]

August 29, 2012

HUFF POST ENTERTAINMENT

Edition: U.S. ▾



Entertainment · Celebrity TV Political Hollywood Features Hollywood Buzz Videos

Moviefone

THE BLOG

Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

HOT ON THE BLOG

John Hillcoat
Harry Shearer

Sen. Ben Cardin
Jeffrey Sachs



Michael Giltz

Freelance writer

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

Subscribe 2

Theater: *Titus Andronicus* as Bloody and Boring as Ever

Posted: 12/13/11 10:06 PM ET

React > Inspiring Funny Hot Scary Outrageous Amazing Weird Crazy

Follow > Theater, Public Theater, Off-Broadway, Shakespeare, William Shakespeare, Entertainment News



[LEARN MORE]

SHARE THIS STORY

1 7 1

0

Get Entertainment Alerts

Sign Up

Submit this story

TITUS ANDRONICUS * 1/2 out of **** PUBLIC THEATER

Whenever a company produces one of William Shakespeare's lesser plays, you can be forgiven for thinking, "Thank goodness!" Not another *Lear* right on top of the last one or the umpteenth *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Yes, let's tackle *Titus* and see what we can do with it! Unfortunately, then you actually see the play and remember why it is one of Shakespeare's lesser plays.

Whether it's the Julie Taymor film version or the numerous other productions from the past, I've never seen a satisfying *Titus*. Director Michael Sexton's messy, confused production is sadly no exception. Most of the tech work is indifferent or bad, but the scenery design by Brett J. Banakis is the central conceit. It involves

essentially a stack of lumber some four feet high that provides a platform for people to stand on and declaim. OK, interesting enough and as they ceremonially remove the top few pieces of lumber to serve as grave markers for the dead, you can see intriguing possibilities as the stack of lumber shrinks and the bodies proliferate.

But nothing is made of this and in fact it's soon abandoned in a way when they pull out saw horses and use lumber to create other, quite unnecessary platforms in front of the original one. Why? Soon, the stage is littered with lumber tossed here and there, some of them covered with uninteresting drawings (like a sword or a crown or the word "rape") that have no impact whatsoever. One cannot however accuse them of not going for broke. By the end of the show, cast members trudge on stage with buckets of blood, toss them at other actors and then trudge off again, creating an unholy mess and some unintentional laughter. Rarely has the detritus of war been presented so completely.

SPONSOR GENERATED POST



Help Us Write 'The Words'

Quick Read | Comments (26) | 08.20.2012

FOLLOW US

MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2

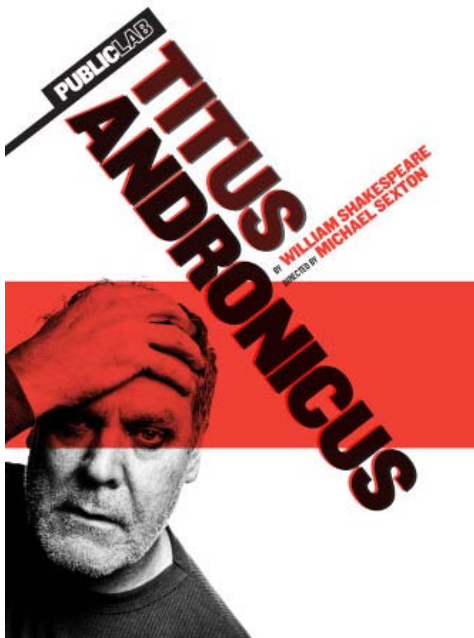


Isaac Balloons Into A Hurricane, New Orleans Threatened

Recommend 644

Limbaugh's Wild Isaac Conspiracy

Like 6k



It's all in the service of Titus (Jay O. Sanders), a triumphant warrior who shows no mercy to the Queen of the Goths Tamora (Stephanie Roth Haberle) and then expects her to show mercy to him. Similarly, Titus turns down the love of the people -- who want him as Emperor of Rome -- and throws his weight behind the petulant Saturninus (Jacob Fishel) in a feud and then expects Saturninus to appreciate his loyalty rather than resent Titus for having such power over his fate in the first place. Titus is a better warrior than politician.

Everyone is soon chopping and raping and cooking up everyone else from Titus's daughter Lavinia (Jennifer Ikeda), who is raped by Tamora's boorish sons, to those very same sons being roasted and served up by Titus in revenge. When a play doesn't work, one raises silly questions. To wit, when Lavinia has her arms chopped off and her tongue cut out, why doesn't Titus ask her to simply nod yes or no while he lists the likely villains? ("Is it someone we know? Is it Saturninus? Is it...?")

Again, one lays the blame squarely on Shakespeare but Sexton is all over the map here and fails to deliver a coherent production. The nicest thing one can do is rescue what we can from the gore.

Sanders is a very good actor and delivers a credible Titus, given the circumstances. Titus isn't very interesting, but that isn't his fault and the scene where Sanders moans a death rattle of pain and woe is quite effective. Ikeda as Lavinia acquits herself nicely when she pleads for mercy from her rapists, though she is as lost as everyone else in the later scenes.

Best of all is Ron Cephas Jones as Aaron, a Moor and the lover of Tamora. Aaron is a villain here and Jones doesn't try to soften or explain Aaron's behavior as a balance to the hateful comments of those who despise him. Instead, he relishes creating a full-blooded, complex character that pleases his Queen, maneuvers intelligently when a crisis occurs and does everything in his considerable power to protect his new born child. And he has fun doing it. Even at his most confused, Shakespeare can offer some redeeming element. The same can be said for this roll of the dice production that came up craps on most everything but Jones.

The Theater Season 2011-2012 (on a four star scale)

[The Agony And The Ecstasy Of Steve Jobs](#) ** 1/2

[All-American](#) **

[All's Well That Ends Well/Shakespeare in the Park](#) **

[The Atmosphere Of Memory](#) 1/2 *

[Bonnie & Clyde feature profile of Jeremy Jordan](#)

[Broadway By The Year: 1997](#) ** 1/2

[The Cherry Orchard with Dianne Wiest](#) **

[Chinglish](#) * 1/2

[Crane Story](#) **

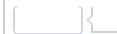
[Cymbeline at Barrow Street Theatre](#) ***

[An Evening With Patti Lupone and Mandy Patinkin](#) ***

[Follies](#) *** 1/2

[Fragments](#) ***

[Godspell](#) ** 1/2



[MAP: Hurricane Isaac's Path Aims For Gulf Coast](#)

Recommend 204



[GOP Candidate Compares Pregnancy From Rape To What?](#)

Recommend 18k



[GOP Approves Abortion Ban](#)

Recommend 7k



[Sylvester Stallone's Half-Sister Dies At 48](#)

Recommend 264



[PHOTO: Christina Aguilera's 'Your Body' Dress Doesn't Leave Much To The Imagination](#)

Like 195



[The Most Awkward Wedding Photobombs](#)

Like 715



[Deaf Boy Asked To Make Controversial Change \(VIDEO\)](#)

Like 2k

DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS 1 of 5



John Hillcoat

[Lawless: Reinventing the Gangster](#)



Sen. Ben Cardin

[This Is No Way to Win an Election](#)

TOP VIDEO PICKS 1 of 8

[Pink's Super Sheer Outfit](#)



[Housewives' Clooney Connection](#)



[Christina Milian Is Excited For New Season Of American Idol and X Factor](#)

MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW 1 of 2

[Samuel L. Jackson's Shocking Tweets About](#)

[Hair](#)***
[Hand To God](#)***
[Hero: The Musical](#) * 1/2
[Hugh Jackman: Back On Broadway](#)***
[Irving Berlin's White Christmas](#)***
[King Lear at Public with Sam Waterston](#)**
[Krapp's Last Tape with John Hurt](#)***
[Lake Water](#)**
[Love's Labor's Lost at the PublicLab](#)** 1/2
[Man And Boy](#) * 1/2
[The Man Who Came To Dinner](#)**
[Maple And Vine](#)**
[Master Class w Tyne Daly](#)** 1/2
[Measure For Measure/Shakespeare in the Park](#)***
[Milk Like Sugar](#)***
[Misterman](#)** 1/2
[The Mountaintop](#)** 1/2
[Newsies](#)**
[Pigpen's The Nightmare Story](#)*** 1/2
[Once](#)*** 1/2
[Olive and The Bitter Herbs](#)** 1/2
[One Arm](#)***
[Other Desert Cities on Broadway](#)** 1/2
[Private Lives](#)**
[Queen Of The Mist](#)** 1/2
[Radio City Christmas Spectacular](#)** 1/2
[Relatively Speaking](#)* 1/2
[The Select \(The Sun Also Rises\)](#)** 1/2
[Seminar](#)**
[Septimus & Clarissa](#)*** 1/2
[Silence! The Musical](#)* 1/2
[69 Degrees South](#)* 1/2
[Sons Of The Prophet](#)*** 1/2
[Spiderman: Turn Off The Dark](#)* 1/2
[Standing On Ceremony: The Gay Marriage Plays](#)**
[Stick Fly](#)**
[The Submission](#)**
[Sweet and Sad](#)**
[Titus Andronicus at Public with Jay O. Sanders](#)* 1/2
[Unnatural Acts](#)***
[Venus In Fur](#)***
[We Live Here](#)**
[Wild Animals You Should Know](#)** 1/2
[Zarkana](#)**

NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL 2011

[Blanche: The Bittersweet Life Of A Wild Prairie Dame](#)*** 1/2
[Central Avenue Breakdown](#)** 1/2
[Crazy, Just Like Me](#)***
[Cyclops: A Rock Opera](#)*
[Ennio: The Living Paper Cartoon](#)** 1/2
[F---ing Hipsters](#)**
[Ghostlight](#)**
[Gotta Getta Girl](#)** 1/2 for staged reading
[Greenwood](#)*
[Jack Perry Is Alive \(And Dating\)](#)* 1/2
[Kiki Baby](#)** 1/2
[Kissless](#)* 1/2
[Madame X](#)**
[The Pigeon Boys](#)***
[Time Between Us](#)* 1/2
[Tut](#)**

FRINGEFEST NYC 2011

[Araby](#)*
[The Bardy Bunch](#)**



Isaac



Jon Voight Blasts Obama Administration, Mainstream Media

HOT ON FACEBOOK

1 of 3



WATCH: Raging Grannies Have Some Words For Todd Akin



Fact-Checking '2016 Obama's America'

HOT ON TWITTER

1 of 2



alyssa_milano
 Sleep Better: How To Use All Your Senses To Promote Sleep
<http://t.co/1UxSV5oG> /via @heykim
[Retweet](#)



pattonoswalt
 Oh man. Gorgeous, touching obituary for Tony Scott by @KevinFCorrigan. This one's a gut-punch: <http://t.co/ajVp7K1L>
[Retweet](#)

Sponsored Links

need wheels? borrow ours.

Gas & insurance included. Join now for \$75 free driving.
zipcar.com

International Travel

Travel Guard Travel Insurance. Protect Yourself - Get A Quote.
www.travelguard.com/International

Playtime at Fisher-Price

Help your kids get the most out of play. Visit our new Playtime Guide!
www.fisher-price.com

[Buy a link here](#)

HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES



Snooki



Smoking



Ask The Parent Coach



Elections 2012



Natural Disasters



Wisconsin



Shadow Conventions 2012



Fox News



GOP

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »](#)

[Books On Tape](#) ** 1/2
[Civilian](#) **
[Hard Travelin' With Woody](#) ***
[Leonard Cohen Koans](#) *** 1/2
[The More Loving One](#) **
[The Mountain Song](#) *** 1/2
[Paper Cuts](#) ***
[Parker & Dizzy's Fabulous Journey To The End Of The Rainbow](#) ** 1/2
[Pearl's Gone Blue](#) ***
[Rachel Calof](#) ** 1/2
[Romeo & Juliet: Choose Your Own Ending](#) **
[2 Burn](#) * 1/2
[Walls and Bridges](#) **
[What The Sparrow Said](#) ** 1/2
[Yeast Nation](#) ***

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Note: Michael Giltz was provided with free tickets to these shows with the understanding that he would be writing a review.

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz

Sponsored Links



What is Scientology?

Think For Yourself and Find Out For Yourself.
Scientology.org/What_Is_Scientology

Car Sharing New York City

Find Zipcars In NYC. Get \$75 Free Driving, Join Today.
zipcar.com



New Policy in New York

June 2012: Drivers w/ no DUIs eligible for up to 50% off car insurance
TheFinanceAuthority.com

Woman is 53 But Looks 25

Mom reveals a simple wrinkle trick that has angered doctors...
www.ConsumerLifestyleMag.com

[Buy a link here](#)

[More in Entertainment...](#)

Robin Williams As
Dwight D.
Eisenhower In...

Fall Movie Preview
2012: 'The Hobbit,'
'Django...

Samuel L. Jackson:
'Unfair' Hurricane
Isaac AVOID...

Lynyrd Skynyrd's
RNC Gig Canceled
Amid Hurricane...

Comments

0

Pending Comments

0

[View FAQ](#)

Comments are closed for this entry

View All

Recency | Popularity

