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THICK BEATS FOR GOOD GIRLS by Checkpoint Theatre

 Theatre Reviews

“Sisters are doing it for themselves”

Reviewer: Christian W. Huber

Performance: 12 April 2018

With *Thick Beats for Good Girls*, Checkpoint Theatre continues to present original theatrical and multi-disciplinary work that boast strong writing, performance and direction. This coming of age tale stars two talented performers, Pooja Nansi and Jessica Bellamy, who gradually peel away the layers of what it means to be women – and especially women who come from an ethnic or religious minority background. Over the course of the evening, they share funny and poignant anecdotes with the audience, along with their common passion: hip hop, the genre of music that has featured so prominently in their lives.

It is very clear from the get go that the words and conviction of the performers are paramount in this staging. Also playing a key role is the great soundtrack of carefully curated music, which makes even the hip hop rookies among us move to the thick beats in their seats. Nansi and Bellamy's performance and chemistry come across as honest and engaging, and the way they share the heartfelt moments in their lives make us feel a little like voyeurs. This is especially apparent when they define for themselves what a 'good girl' from either a Hindu or Jewish family should be like, or describe their first forays into discovering their bodies, or share the first time each of them enjoyed sexual relations (their not-so-enjoyable experiences get mentioned, too).

Kudos to the performers and director Huzir Sulaiman for knowing how to rein in moments that could have become too melodramatic or 'emo', by keeping the action moving. Through it all, hip hop is always there for them, whether it's in the club, on the radio, or in a car.

The set by Petrina Dawn Tan is simple and effective, with colourful circles and lines on the floor and back wall of the stage to depict the vibrant universe that the women live in. It allows us to focus on the text without distraction.

There are no special twists or turns to keep audiences guessing what might happen next in this work, and the fact that the theatre was only about a third full on the night this reviewer attended is a sign that it may not be palatable for all tastes. Nonetheless, the 95-minute piece makes for a good night out at the theatre, especially for those who can relate to how music can help one's journey through life.

The sense of empowerment with which the performers live their lives – warts and all – is beautifully captured with all the swagger that hip hop music is known for. It reiterates Shakespeare's take on music being the “food of love”, and if so, it needs to be played on and on.

Do you have an opinion or comment about this post? Email us at info@centre42.sg.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

THICK BEATS FOR GOOD GIRLS by Checkpoint Theatre

5 – 22 April 2018

Drama Centre Black Box

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Christian is a C42 Boiler Room 2016 playwright, and enjoys being an audience member to different mediums of the arts. He finds arts invigorating to the soul, and truly believes that the vibrant arts scene has come a long way from its humble beginnings.