

Ensemble has huge triumph

**TREVOR KEELING
REVIEW**

FIRST BORN

An original TheatreiNQ production adapted and directed by Terri Brabon

GREEK theatre is a style of performance we don't get many opportunities to see.

So it is wonderful to be able to see something like this – particularly when it's this good.

It is a theatrical style characterised by fine ensemble work and the portrayal of emotion in a way that can only be described as "huge".

To be accessible to a modern audience it must be innovative and entertaining. And this production has all these elements to varying degrees.

If you are familiar with the work of TheatreiNQ artistic director Terri Brabon then you will recognise the blend of innovation and ensemble work.

The result is a characteristic production that never lets up in pace or dramatic effect.

This time Terri has looked to the classical Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Euripides and

Sophocles for inspiration. She has created a new work centred around the story of Agamemnon (King of Argos), his wife, Clytemnestra, and their children Electra and Orestes. (And, if you are not familiar with the story, I suggest you do some research.)

The works and constant evolution of this innovative theatre company we have in our midst has always been of great interest to me.

I have always marvelled at Terri's ability to produce extraordinary things from her ensemble of dedicated Townsville community actors.

And for this work, she has stepped the ensemble work up several noticeable notches.

Chorus work is a key element to Greek theatre – chorus work fails and the entire work fails.

The chorus serves as the collective voice on the action in the play, and this chorus was a fluid, dramatically exciting group of 11 whose voice and movement work was the highlight of the entire production.

In all of her works, Terri always manages to create an al-

ternative world that for the duration of a couple of hours allows the audience to suspend reality and enter into a world costumed in distinctive styles, and populated with people who have particular customs and habits. And this ancient Greek world she has created is no different.

The great challenge in Greek theatre is, of course, the acting style – in particular the portrayal of the hugeness of emotion.

It represents a major challenge for untrained actors or actors in training to grasp the enormity of this.

The more experienced actors in the cast were able to access this, particularly Terri Brabon as Clytemnestra, Brendan O'Connor as Agamemnon and a particularly riveting performance from Anna Vella-Samms as Cassandra, who truly got to grips with the enormity of the emotions.

Another success to add to TheatreiNQ's impressive list.

First Born continues until Saturday, July 7, at Dance-north. Book at theatreinq.com or trybooking.com



MAGIC INSPIRATION: Emily Edwards in *First Born*.

Picture: CHRISSIE MAGUIRE