INSTANT

**Review by George Nikou – November 29, 2016**

**Instant** by Geordie Productions Directed by Dean Patrick Flemming. Written by Erin Shields. Leah Fong, Rosie, Dakota Jamal Wellman, Jay, Michelle Rambharose, Meredith. **Theatre**: Mobile set. **Running time**: 1 hour 15 minutes.

Having been to so few plays in my lifetime, I feel as though *Instant* offered much in terms of creativity. With such minimal use of equipment, costumes or even any form of proper lighting, the cast was surely given a challenging role to play.

The plot of this play is rather simple. It begins with three teenagers who share similar goals, yet each with different aspirations. We are first introduced to Meredith, a young teen who wants every little girl’s dream, to become a pop star. Her inspiration to become a star, though, starts rather randomly. Meredith (Michelle Rambharose) wastes no time in showing her charismatic side by springing with joy, expressing and imagining how she one day will be popular. However, the audience couldn’t help but feel that deep inside, Meredith was lonely and unappreciated.

We later are introduced to Jay (Dakota Jamal Wellman). The actor did a great job of portraying a young teenager who wants to be an up-and-coming hockey star. As the story progresses and the fog starts to clear, it becomes apparent that Jay wishes to be acknowledged and loved by his father, which is where his ambitions to become a famous hockey player comes into play. His father loved the sport and favored its players. So, perhaps by becoming a famous hockey player, his father would love him, too. There was a moment in the play where Jay loses his composure and bursts into an all-out rage. As he attacked the opposing team member, the audience couldn’t help but feel sad for him. There are many teenagers who suffer internally and end up suppressing so much pent up anger, all because of a parent’s negligence. Dakota did a fantastic job of painting that picture with his superb acting.

Lastly, we come across the third teenager named Rosie (Leah Fong). Rosie, who is 15 years old, comes across as a generous and very giving person. She’s not really popular and at times socially awkward but tends to keep more to herself as the story develops. Her one wish in the world is to help her father who suffers from MS. Leah did a phenomenal job of recreating that young, sweet and somewhat-gullible girl.

Having been introduced to all three characters, the play’s outcome was rather predictable. Meredith’s fiery and jealous attitude was certain to collide with Rosie’s innocent personality. As predictable as it was, it did not prevent me from actually enjoying it. To see the difference between a singer who sings with pain, sadness and hope reminded me about why I myself get emotional when listening to certain music. I also enjoyed watching the moment Rosie got tricked into confessing her love for Jay. Indirect bullying is a common strategy used these days, and I feel it was a good representation of how impactful and cruel people of all ages can be. Moreover, I particularly liked the fact that the story felt organic and flowed smoothly. Part of the reason it did flow so well was a true testament to how great the script was written. The writing was well thought out and pieced together.

However, the same cannot be said about the lackluster set production. Having nothing but a set of illuminating, meter-sized projections and absolutely zero lighting effects, it left much to be desired. Surely, having an imagination aids in filling in the blanks, but I couldn’t help the feeling of wanting more. Having more, however, doesn’t always mean having better. The audio at certain moments of the play was rather good. Sound definitely helped to intensify certain key moments of the play, which would otherwise have been somewhat forgettable. I also felt a missed opportunity when it boiled down to the actual cast size. Having included family members such as Rosie’s father or even Meredith’s mother would have certainly painted an easier picture for the viewer. Granted, this was intended to be a traveling set with a low budget, so one cannot fault them for that.

Overall, having been to so few plays in my lifetime, I was glad I didn’t miss this one*. Instant* was an enjoyable and engaging experience. It was funny as it was emotional. Even without a bigger budget, which in turn would result in a larger cast, props and even lighting, *Instant* still held its own. By staying true to its script, the actors were able to piece together, what I believe, was a memorable play.