

I attended a live theatre performance of "Madam Harpagon" which was an adaptation of Molière's "The Miser". This modern staging presented a refreshing take on the timeless story, with notable differences in character portrayal and the incorporation of contemporary music.

One key difference in "Madam Harpagon" was the shift in the main character's gender, which contributed to the play's comedic elements. Madam Harpagon, portrayed as a strong-willed and humorous woman, took center stage alongside her two daughters. This alteration brought a fresh and entertaining perspective to the narrative and amplified the comedic potential.

In "Madam Harpagon," the play effectively utilized the female gender to inject humor into the storyline. A funny moment occurred when Madam Harpagon attempted to attract Mario by removing her upper garments. However, to the amusement of the audience, a tassel was revealed, playfully suggesting that the character is older and has large, floppy breasts. This clever twist added an additional layer of hilarity and allowed the audience to engage their imaginations.

The use of contemporary music in the play was a striking addition, enhancing the atmosphere driving the plot forward, and emphasizing character stereotypes. Notably, music was employed during the scene where Madam Harpagon hid her treasure in the garden. The rhythmic beats and catchy tunes intensified the action and created a sense of urgency. Also, music played a crucial role in creating a heightened sense of comedy whenever Valere made an appearance on stage. Each time Valere entered a scene, a distinctive laugh effect resonated, instantly signaling to the audience that his character was expected to be humorous and embody a specific stereotype.

The staging techniques were visually captivating and thoughtfully designed. The elevated stage, set as Madam Harpagon's house, offered a clear view for the audience. The intimate blackbox theater setting, with three rows of chairs, created an immersive experience that drew the audience into the world of the play. This setting allows players to interact with the audience.

The acting in "Madam Harpagon" was commendable, with the cast demonstrating a keen awareness of the audience's presence. They engaged with the spectators, posing questions, and creating a sense of participation. This interactive approach added an element of surprise and involvement. Furthermore, the actors' self-awareness as performers was skillfully showcased for example when Frosine questioned if the play was finished to react to the event of Madam Harpagon passing out. This meta-theatrical moment provided a clever and humorous twist, reminding us of the artifice of the medium itself.

The production also left certain elements to the audience's imagination, encouraging personal interpretation and engagement. A striking example was the scene where Madam Harpagon struck La Flèche's mouth, with white pebbles thrown from her mouth and hand. This use of visual cues stimulated the viewers' imagination and contributed to the overall impact of the play.

While dance was not incorporated, the focus remained on the adapted script, dynamic character relationships, and innovative use of music and staging techniques.

In conclusion, "Madam Harpagon" breathed new life into Molière's "The Miser" through daring adaptations and creative choices. The shift in the main character's gender, the incorporation of contemporary music, and the thoughtful staging techniques added depth and excitement to the familiar narrative. The engaging performances, actors' awareness of the audience, blackbox stage and skillful use of theatrical conventions makes me feel like I was part of the play. Overall, I am glad to watch "Madam Harpagon" since it was a funny experience.

Proof of Watching:



**Madam Harpagon**

Bilkent Oda Tiyatrosu

26 Nisan 2023, Çarşamba - 19:00

**Salon A48**

Tam / Online / 45TL

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