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REVIEWS

The Truth About Lying (2016), Review

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PRODUCTION

[The Truth About Lying: Heresy and Common Sense for the Theatre \(2016\)](#)

BY

[The Finger Players](#)

PERFORMANCE DATE & TIME

21 April 2016, 12:00pm

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REVIEWER

[Andrew Yuen](#)

OTHER REVIEWS BY ANDREW YUEN

[National Language Class \(2016\), Review](#)

REVIEW

The Hungry Artists

It begins with yours truly struggling frantically to retrieve a pen that had inconveniently rolled to the abyss at the back of my seat. Having decided that its retrieval is not worth my dignity, I sit back in time for the play's bold address – that everything performed within is based on truth.

Bold for a show about lying.

It has been said that many are called but few are chosen. The three characters in the play recount their struggles one at a time, while the other two serve as foils within their stories. Anecdotes from anonymous performers are interspersed throughout.

The tone is decidedly cynical. Artistic struggle exists at the intersection between idealism and reality. One must have the passion to keep going, step by step while bleeding from the heart. The show portrays theatre as one in which very few are chosen, and the others cast aside (pun intended). Singapore is small, and the scene is competitive. By extension, this performance claims that theatre is a microcosm of our society, one which is interstitially small. An older actress recounts competing for older roles with younger actresses. After a segment in which flashing lights portray the characters racing anxieties, I begin to feel fatigued by the play's pervasive cynicism and catching myself wondering, "Is it really all that bad?"

But perhaps the cynicism acts as a necessary catharsis for those that struggle. I catch some sniffles and nodding heads in the audience, no doubt from comrades in arms. I tend to respond to emotional displays with disinterest but this play does pack some emotional punches.

I mean, the stories are real after all.

One character laments that there is nothing else worth doing. Another spoke of acting as the profession for pathological liars. Yet another spoke of acting as uncovering truth. All these answers and aphorisms ultimately leave me cold and asking, "What is the truth?"

These questions probe. I wish that more time can be used to explore these pathologies. The play ends as all biographical things do. I.e. without resolution. It threatens itself with its cynicism towards a cynical establishment, but it is ultimately necessary as part of a continuing conversation between those invested in the arts. The conversation has to continue for better of those who are compelled to struggle. Hopefully though, with a little less sniffing.