



25 May 2011 (Wed)

**Macbeth, National Taiwan University**

Undoubtedly the team with the most inventive and unorthodox production of this year, National Taiwan University chose to make their Macbeth as topical and relevant to modern audiences as possible. Visually it was extremely striking: a gigantic green election poster at the back of the page screaming out “Yes, Macbeth”. There was something very sinister about the propaganda machine denoted by this poster. The debased politics of modern election campaigns, and the ambition that lies behind them, was very much the preoccupation of this production. The witches were campaign workers; Macbeth was a ruthlessly corrupt politician (he eventually ends up in jail) egged on by his trophy wife. The articulation of the lines was not always very clear; and some of the dialogue was lost in this very busy production. One got the sense that for this team language was secondary to spectacle—nevertheless this was an intelligent, clever and striking production, played with great energy. The relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth was highly sexualized, rather carnivorously so—a legitimate extrapolation from the text, I think. The Taiwan production was a kind of visual Macbeth poem, or fantasia on Shakespeare’s play, rather than a strict performance of it. Some of the action was perhaps a little obscure. I thought this team had an extremely tight sense of stagecraft. A highly engaging production that was never boring.

*Prof. Peter Holbrook*