

that play

a solo macbeth

REVIEWS

American Theatre Web "Don't Miss *That Play*" by Laura Shea

Midtown International Theatre Festival

"Don't you just love a woman with a plan?" asks Tom Gualtieri, the one man who plays all the parts in *That Play*, a ninety-minute rendition of *Macbeth*. The woman in question is Lady Macbeth, a diva-esque creation, and only one of nineteen characters played by Gualtieri in a cast that includes three very weird sisters, a manly but sensitive Macduff, and a tragic hero who needs more than a little help from his obliging wife. Gualtieri and co-adaptor/director Heather Hill have ... added a wry running commentary that enhances the play without diminishing the tragedy. The Scottish play was never funnier or more serious.

Although the play is still called *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth has a special place in Gualtieri's heart. Whether tugging at his trouser leg as if it were a ball gown, or rereading the letter from Macbeth detailing the witches' prophecies, a letter that the writer/actor

informs us she has read 100 times before, Gualtieri creates a memorable portrait of the "greatest hostess in Scotland." Her "We fail?" spoken in response to Macbeth's growing uncertainty about their enterprise would make the even most recalcitrant husband snap to attention.

Although the lights shift to indicate the change from drama to narrative, within the play Gualtieri must show us the many shifts in character using only vocal intonation and inspired physicality. The small black box theater at the Abingdon Theatre Complex leaves little room for anything else. From warrior king to drunken porter to those wild apparitions who hint at strange doings that "stretch out to th' crack of doom," Gualtieri avoids one downfall of a one-man show—lack of variety—by not limiting the show to just one man. Aided and abetted by the clever commentary and some evocative incidental music by Erin Hill, Gualtieri creates not just a parade of characters but the complete world of the play.