

Theater Review: He Who Says Yes. He Who Says No

By HELEN KAYE
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The Ruth Kanner Theater Group doing Brecht - this is a show to run to.

He Who Says Yes. He Who Says No
By Bertolt Brecht
Translated by Aharon Shabtai
Staging by Ruth Kanner & Theater Group

Watching a performance by the Ruth Kanner Theater Group is a privilege because it is visually beautiful; because the execution is uniformly excellent; because it has an uncompromising integrity; because it is intelligent; and because, above all, it communicates.

This piece is no exception. Drawing its material from Brecht's opera play (c. 1929-30 and itself taken from a Japanese Noh play), from a local folk tale and from personal archives, *Yes/No* explores conformity, consensus and the collective set against independent thinking and the individual.

Both plays have almost the same text, but because one answer is 'yes' and the other, 'no,' the outcome is different. A teacher and some pupils plan a risky trip up a mountain. On the climb, the youngest lad is faint. Must they go back for his sake, or will he be sacrificed for the common good.

The set is a bare stage with a line of colorful backpacks across the rear. The music, played on the piano, is by Ronen Shapira. Actors Ronen Babloky, Dafna Karkabi, Tali Krik and Guy Salman convey the text in song, movement and gesture. The 'Yes' half is mannered, stylized almost like the Noh itself (but not). The 'No' half more anarchic – spontaneous, as it were. Delicacy, wit and humor inform both.

This is a show to run to.