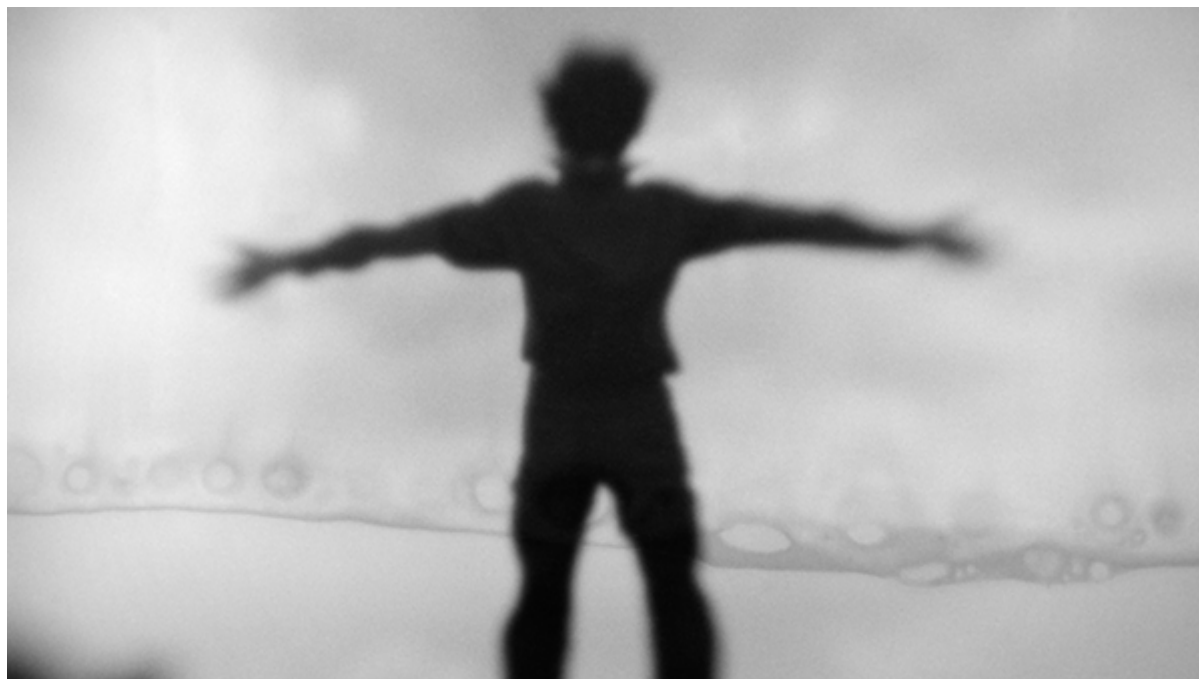

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Dublin Theatre Festival 2013 - The Events brave attempt at an answer

October 3, 2013

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The Events
The Events

The Events by David Greig

Rating: ★★★★★

David Greig's *The Events*, currently running at The Peacock Theatre, is a cram packed meditation on many themes revolving around a compelling story of mass murder. Masculinity, interculturalism, tribalism and spree killings are just a few of those explored in a fascinating story about the killing of a choir by a nameless young boy. In her attempt to understand the events that led to the event, survivor and victim Claire, asks the eternal why as she tries gather all the reasons together in an effort to find the reason behind the incomprehensible. Claire spirals into obsession, bringing her close to becoming that which she hates as God, her lesbian lover and even her choir all appear to abandon her. Desperately, she searches for answers in nature, nurture, a book by a journalist, a blog by a politician, madness, evil, absent parents. But all fall short of providing an ultimate answer in this thought provoking play which offers some fascinating insights but which often gets

entangled in its own ambition.

Inspired by the killings in Norway in 2011 perpetrated by Anders Breivik, *The Events* opens with flavors of quintessential Englishness. A choir of mature members gathers in a local hall complete with tea urn, kettle and piano, ready to rehearse with Claire, the local, female priest. But danger lurks in the form of a young man standing at the door. Claire warmly invites him to join their “crazy tribe,” a good deed that will not go unpunished. This is immediately followed by a mediation on an aboriginal boy gazing at convict ships arriving in Australia. A Norwegian coffee song sung by the choir follows as *The Events* stakes out its disjointed narrative and intercultural credentials. As the story unfolds its varied mediations attempt to cover all the bases as voice is given to questions of racism, infanticide, empathy impairment, choice and the two percent of DNA that separates us from monkeys. With so much crammed in the effect was disconcerting at times with several parts being utterly fascinating, but the whole feeling too busy in places.

This sense of compression spilled over into the production. With its sixteen strong choir and two actors on the small stage at all times, the sense of a packed humanity with no room to breathe was palpable. Neve McIntosh’s as Claire and Rudi Dharmalingam playing several characters, including the nameless boy murderer, were strong throughout. But the uneasy relationship between the choir on the night, a different choir is engaged each night, and the actors created an odd energy and often felt ill at ease. Director Ramin Gray ensured the action moved along at a steady pace, but some choices, as when McIntosh mimes to Dizzee Rascal’s, Bonkers, were not as successful as they might have been. Such moments were offset by others of pure delight as when McIntosh and Dharmalingam proudly discuss the imagined child of Claire and her lover Caitriona.

In attempting to cover all the bases, *The Events* can feel displaced at times, but this also reinforces its refusal to offer easy answers. As the final scene closes the circle, an invitation to hope and humanity in the face of the unimaginable is offered. Then *The Events* true theme rises to the surface and cohesion of its disparate elements is achieved. For only then is it clear that what *The Events* sought was never answers, but redemption.

David Grieg's *The Events* by Actors Touring Company UK runs at The Peacock Theatre until October 5th

Door opens at 8.30 p.m.

Admission is €20.00 – €25.00

For further information check the following link: <http://www.abbeytheatre.ie>



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