

Brief audience feedback/discussion recorded by Charlie Davison (volunteer) immediately after:-

GROUND~~E~~D by George Brant.
Gate Theatre production with Lucy Ellinson

Colchester Arts Centre, 26ⁿ November 2014

Charlie:- *What did you think?*

Audience member (female 1):- *I thought it was stunning - I mean for her to hold our attention for a whole hour... The storytelling was brilliant, the language was stunning her acting was superb..the little technical touches..*

Audience member (male 1):- *The design was wonderful, the whole concept of her in the box.. was just from a visual and listening experience was just amazing*

Charlie:- *Was it what you were expecting in any way?*

Audience member (male 1):- *I had read about the play before I came so I had some expectations But I had no idea that it seemed so much of a sort of 2014 piece ... Very current..*

Charlie:- *Yeah.. yeah*

Audience member (male 1):- *I've never heard anybody talk about flying a drone before!*

Audience member (female 1):- *And the fact that it was a woman and the way she linked together her life as a fighter pilot and her life as a mother and a wife. It was exquisitely done*

Audience member (male 1):- *We read in our papers about all the criticism of the Americans using drones in different parts of the world, and it was very real*

Audience member (female 1):- *We were there, weren't we? We were there for an hour.*

Charlie:- *It's got a lot of intensity hasn't it?*

Audience member (female 1):- *Very very powerful.*

Audience member (male 1):- *She was wonderful. We all thought she was American! And then she talks at the end with her British accent... Wonderful!..*

Stunning!

Charlie:-

I mean obviously it's two minutes after you've seen the show, but do you think it's going to make you think differently about anything... Or...?

Audience member
(female 2):-

Yes! I think it's going to make me reflect on ... on.. 21st century warfare... and the people who are involved in it and the actual jobs that they have to do... And I think whole.. the piece at the end about how she, you know, juxtaposed her own life onto what she was doing and saw her daughter in that image - I think that was very very powerful.

Audience member
(male 1):-

The genius of the piece is that it managed to personalise things that we just read about in the papers - that there was an individual experience that this woman..you know her whole life had been downgraded because of a pregnancy to flying this stuff! And talking about it as a personal experience - where we just read in our newspapers as statistics.

Charlie:-

Absolutely - and for me there was that sort of, umm.. for all of that errm, that TOP GUN thing that she was when she was like (in inverted commas) a "PROPER" fighter pilot and all of that seems to get concentrated down..you know

Audience member
(female 1):-

Yeah.. yeah.. exactly.. yeah.. concentrated down to the actual task that she has to perform. And the use of the word "grey" all the time - it was extremely repetitive But it was very powerful. And it just conjured up the image of the desert.

Audience member
(male 1):-

It's very clever of the writer.. the writing is wonderful.

Charlie:-

And one of the shocking things for me is the realisation literally just now that actually that must be true for some people - that actually must be what

Audience member
(female 1):-

Well that's what I mean about it being a 21st-century piece. Because you know we read about these things all the time in the papers And we are so distanced from them. And for that hour that we just had, we weren't distanced from it. We were actually part of it.

Audience member (male 1):- *On the other hand - we are happy for the enemy to be destroyed aren't we? When we read in our papers about what ISIS is doing we are happy for characters like that to destroy them.*

Audience member (female 1):- *I must admit I was thinking about that - thinking about the drones and ISIS, yes.*

Audience member (male):- *We want that, don't we?*

Charlie:- *So.. what.. there's a sort of level of guilt about the..*

Audience member (male):- *So there's an ambiguity..*

Audience member (female 1):- *Yes - a guilty one, yes.*

Audience member (male 1):- *Because there was her individual story where she felt demeaned by what she was doing - but at the same time there is the whole political and military and strategic aspect of it all. And at the end where she confused the daughter of the err final prophet with her own child.. you know a very broad.. err a BIG PIECE!*

Charlie:- *Very clever to have it in Las Vegas which is almost the definition of artificial things!*

Audience member (female 1):- *Exactly. Exactly - And the desert as well - exchanging one desert for another!*

Charlie:- *Thank you, thank you very very much.*

Audience member (female 1):- *You're very very welcome. Nice to talk to you.*

Charlie:- *How's it left you feeling?*

Audience member (female 2):- *I think it was very powerful and it also highlights the whole issue of women and war and what motherhood and the effect that motherhood has even on those of us who don't sort of feel that we're naturally the most natural umm mothers..*

Charlie:- *She is a fascinating character at the beginning, isn't she? I mean she's a kind of macho woman. (laughter)*

Audience member (female 2):- *Yeah yeah..you think that she's going to be, umm, a lesbian, to begin with. You think that all this comes with it... BUT it's not. It's just that she thinks like a guy. She's has an engineering, mathematical kind of a brain. And because of one thing leading to another, err, her becoming, you know, her role changes. And expectations on her by the military change as well. And yet ultimately they expected her still to be able to take somebody out. So they took her out of her plane and didn't let her get out there - but ultimately they still expected her to be able to take somebody out.*

Charlie:- *They still expected her to be a killer, sort of thing?*

Audience member (female 2):- *Yeah - exactly.*

Audience member (male 2):- *There's that nice line where she says that the Odyssey would have been a different story if Odysseus had gone home every night. (laughter)*

Charlie:- *Yeah if I think about one line from tonight, I'm sure it's going to be that one!*

Charlie:- *So... what did you think?*

Audience member (male 3):- *Fantastic.. yeah.. absolutely fantastic. I mean the whole show, really. I've never really seen anything like it. The lighting, the music, the whole atmosphere they made. And I mean the actress - Wow! She was really something, I mean, to be able to kind of...*

Charlie:- *She's extraordinary, isn't she?*

Audience member (male 3):- *Definitely - yeah. I mean to be able to learn and then performing the way that she did. Err it's really, yeah, breathtaking really. So... really very good.*

Charlie:- *You must have thought about the thing before, you know, about the idea of drones and killing people remotely,*

Audience member (male 3):- *Definitely - I've read quite a lot about it.*

Charlie:- *So has it changed that?*

Audience member (male 3):- *I mean it hasn't changed my position on it I guess. Because I was already quite you know, sort of, quite anti that kind of thing! But definitely made me think a lot more about it and the people that do it. About, yeah, it must be just the weirdest life (laugh).*

Charlie:- *It seems like a completely crazy story until you realise that it probably is somebody's story!*

Audience member (male 3):- *Yeah. It could well be. I don't really know if it's a true story or not. But things like that must happen all the time. And yeah it just only gives you a really different perspective to it, doesn't it? And they must've done so much research as well for the play. Because some of it has really intimate details of what it must be like to lead that kind of life and the problems that they would have because of the psychological problems. And also the whole moral aspect of it. Yeah it was fascinating - I learned quite a lot as well! It definitely makes you see things in a whole different kind of light and apart from that, it's just a great piece of theatre - it's just great to watch.*

Charlie:- *Yeah! Amazingly enough, considering that it's only got one person in it - in a cube!*

Audience member (male 3):- *Yeah - I know (laughs). Like I said, I haven't really seen anything like it before. But yeah it's definitely very innovative. And yeah it's a fantastic thing to be able to come and see on a Wednesday night, really!*

Charlie:- *Great - thank you!*

Audience member (male 3):- *Brilliant!*