Rachel Tan

Grade 11

Killarney Secondary School

Impactful and Inspiring Change

By Rachel Tan

 We are currently living through an unforeseeable time where the world has been turned upside down by disease, hatred, and corruption. Evil has always been prevalent in our society, but it has been amplified further nowadays as it spreads throughout the internet. These dark times are disheartening to witness, and it is incredibly frustrating to know that there is still a lot of obsolete prejudice out there compared to our fast, advancing society. Despite the world’s negativity, live theatre can be a beacon of light for everyone, especially for young people who will be changing the world. Live theatre shows the impact that individuals can make through their words and actions, as seen in the production of Urinetown: The Musical where Bobby Strong starts his own revolution. While it may be underappreciated, live theatre is a vital part of society.

 Live theatre has the power to inform and inspire the audience through the actors’ stage presence, the technical aspects of the show, and most importantly, the messages of the story. Teenagers often face many struggles as they grow and encounter new challenges in life, which can be burdening and cause a sense of hopelessness. I know that many students feel lost and insignificant in the massive world. Growing up and trying to figure out what our futures will look like isn’t easy when there’s an immense amount of pressure that’s put on us. However, theatre reminds us that we are not alone, and it encourages us through our tough times. The stories of performances open our eyes to other people’s experiences and allow us to connect with one another. Seeing the actors perform and hearing them deliver their lines in person leave viewers with a stronger impact compared to watching a movie. Additionally, live theatre gives us the strength and courage to find our own voice and use it to speak up for what we believe in. From my own experience of going to shows, I’ve been touched by many of the productions that I’ve seen. There have been many moments where I’ve laughed, gotten angry, and even cried while watching live theatre.

 Whether it’s a musical with elaborate props and flashy costumes or a one-person show with simple backdrops and minimal costume changes, live theatre always leaves viewers with a lesson to take home. As the audience becomes immersed into the story while watching a show, they form a connection to the characters and their conflicts. By seeing how the actors and actresses overcome their dilemmas, we can learn from them and apply our newly gained insight into our own lives. Through watching live theatre and thinking about the lessons that it teaches us; everyone can make an impact on society. We are shown the perspectives of different people in performances, allowing us to reflect upon ourselves and question our world. Society is flawed in many ways, and theatre emphasizes that it is up to us to create change for a better future. As humans have the power to bring down injustice and stop negativity, theatre can be the spark to ignite our courage.

I have always felt that life is not perfect, but everyone is capable of making it better. After watching Urinetown: The Musical, I began to understand how much of an impact a person can make not just in their own lives, but for other people as well. The story takes place in a world where a 20-year-old drought causes terrible water shortages, which leads to all washrooms being controlled by a huge company. Although the plot may sound extreme, I think that it is not far-fetched since our current climate is endangered and we live in a capitalistic society. The protagonist, Bobby Strong followed his heart and stood up for his beliefs by starting a revolution against the inhumane Urine Good Company. I witnessed the determination and fighting spirit of the characters in the musical and it was an inspiring story for me. Many people banded together and worked towards the same goal, which shows that people who look different from each other or come from different backgrounds have more similarities than differences. Urinetown: The Musical recognized that feeling out of place is acceptable and the importance of speaking up when you know that something is wrong. I think that the show’s main message is valuable for everyone, especially young people like me to hear since we will soon play a larger role in the world.

During a time where society is largely divided, theatre can bring people together and spark change to happen. I’ve been fortunate enough to have watched various performances around Vancouver and I’m very grateful for the opportunity. There is a lot that I have learned about the world and myself after attending different shows. I have been thoroughly entertained by shows, many of which have left a powerful impact on me. Live theatre has empowered me and caused me to seek after change in my own life.