

British Theatre Guide

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Antigone: The Musical

Book by Marina McCready. The music by Marina McCready and Felix Elliott

Hard Luck Musicals

theSpace @ Surgeons Hall

15–27 August 2022



You can imagine this theatre company having a great deal of fun with Sophocles' *Antigone*. There is a singing and dancing comic Creon (Jack Lawrence) who in song lets us know "someone's got to be a villain," a dancing chorus line of advisors, a love story between Ismene (Marianne Ryall) and Haemon (Jas Ratchford), gentle audience participation and a revolution.

A six-piece band and a confident cast of fine singers deliver mostly upbeat songs whose lyrics often have an eye for the modern vernacular.

Not that they don't take the classic story seriously. It begins with the original scenario in which two brothers have died fighting each other but only one has been given a funeral. The other, regarded as a traitor by King Creon, is refused a burial with the additional threat of death for anyone who tries to bury him.

Antigone (Sukanya Subramaniyan) insists both should be shown respect and is determined to bury him. At this point, the musical shifts outwards to involve the rest of Thebes. Antigone's stand prompts solidarity from Ismene and Haemon who both argue for a collective rebellion.

At the same time, discontent is rumbling amongst others in the kingdom, which is referred to as a "capitalist hierarchical patriarchal society." And to emphasise the point, as Creon sings his villainy song, a woman sits knitting beside him.

Even his advisor Tiresias (Jasmin Thien) feels used as a "puppet on a string", a "mere character in a play" whose "self-esteem is being trampled on."

Tiresias joins the entire cast apart from Creon as they urge in song everyone to "join the revolution. Rise up now. Let's burn the kingdom down." Agitational leaflets are passed out among the audience.

The revolution's success takes power away from Creon who is given something more useful to do. The city begins "building a new life" which will include the "abolition of private property, no exploitation and more funds for the creative arts."

This fast-moving well performed musical directed by Ella Joralemon may not quite fit with the bleakness of our current political climate, but like many of the Greek classics, it provides a moral compass for the way the world ought to be.

Reviewer: [Keith Mckenna](#)