2003

The Rose of Treason

Mindy M. Nelsen

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Reviewer: Mindy M. Nelsen
Reading Level: Young adult;
Rating: Outstanding;
Genre: Historical Plays; Plays; Contemporary Realistic Plays;
Subject: Drama--Reviews; World War II, 1939-1945--Juvenile drama; Family--Juvenile drama;
Theme: It’s always worth the price you pay to stand up for what you believe in and do what’s inherently right.
Production Requirements: Simplistic set, slide projector is essential, ready with several quotes (provided) and pictures.
Acts: 2
Run Time: 90 minutes
Characters: 26+ with possibility of double casting, production could be done with as few as 12 actors.
Cast: 6 must be women, 18 must be men; the rest are flexible
Time Period: 1940's, World War II

This is a fictional dramatization based on the true story of Sophie Scholl. As a young girl, growing up in Nazi Germany, Sophie and her brother Hans have been taught what is right and wrong by their open-minded parents. Six years pass and they mature into young adults and are confronted with what stance they will take regarding the current war and rumors of the mistreatment and subsequent deaths of Nazi prisoners. While attending a university, they and a select group of their friends, start a resistance group against the Nazi party and publish a pamphlet called “The White Rose” wherein they expose the truth about the Nazi party and its leader. They eventually get caught and are put to death for their efforts, but are remembered as some of the few who dared to do the right thing.

The play is fast paced and compacted with important issues and decisions. The characters are given the opportunity to develop and become men and women of integrity, based on their determination to get the truth out into public. The playwright has included an outside character of Else who never quite communicates with the other characters, but is, in part, the narrator expressing how the people of Germany react to the war. This adds another dimension to the play and its possibilities. It has elements of high tension and moments of love and honesty. A huge focus is the slide projector which helps to tell the truth from the lies, filled with quotes from Hitler and resistance leaders. The audience is swept up, questioning themselves about what is right and wrong and how they would react in such a situation. The play does have a large portion of semi-vulgar language and intense themes that question its appropriateness for a younger audience. It is not recommended for the primary interest level for this reason. The deaths of three characters are portrayed as they stand, valiantly facing the audience (the world) and their spot light goes out. The play is intense with projected images (director’s choosing) and well-worded dialogue, but no violence is actually shown on stage. Light complications emerge from its use of production equipment, costumes and lighting. This play is nonetheless recommended because of its power and message.