

Bigmouth Smallwar: Two Plays by Oberon Modern Plays



Bigmouth/SmallWaR: Two Plays (Oberon Modern Plays) by Ingrid Vort

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 687 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 294 pages
Lending	: Enabled
Paperback	: 112 pages
Item Weight	: 3.81 ounces
Dimensions	: 5.21 x 0.33 x 8.28 inches



Bigmouth Smallwar is a collection of two short plays by the acclaimed British playwright Caryl Churchill, published in 1979 by Oberon Modern Plays. The plays, titled *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* and *Cloud Nine*, explore complex and challenging themes of family dynamics, social commentary, and psychological realism. This essay will provide a comprehensive review and analysis of *Bigmouth Smallwar*, examining its unique dramaturgical techniques, thought-provoking subject matter, and enduring relevance in contemporary British theater.

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire is a historical play set in England during the English Civil War. The play follows the experiences of the Gerrard family, a group of radical Puritans who become embroiled in the conflict between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians. Churchill uses the historical setting to explore themes of religious extremism, political violence, and the complexities of family relationships.

The play is notable for its fragmented and non-linear structure, which reflects the chaotic and tumultuous nature of the English Civil War. Churchill employs multiple perspectives and time shifts to create a disorienting and challenging theatrical experience for the audience. The characters are often contradictory and ambivalent, their motivations driven by a mix of religious zeal, personal ambition, and familial loyalty.

The play's central protagonist is Praise-God Barebone, a radical Puritan leader who believes that God is directly guiding the Parliamentary cause. Barebone's unwavering faith and determination are contrasted with the more skeptical and pragmatic attitudes of his fellow family members. The play explores the tension between individual conscience and collective action, as well as the dangers of religious fanaticism.

Cloud Nine

Cloud Nine is a more contemporary play that explores similar themes of family relationships and social commentary. The play is set in two time periods: 1880 and 1980. In the 1880 scenes, the play follows the British colonial family of the Cliffords in Africa. In the 1980 scenes, the play depicts the same family, now living in London.

Churchill uses this dual timeline to explore the changing social and sexual mores of British society over a century. In the 1880 scenes, the play depicts

the patriarchal and repressive nature of Victorian society. The women characters are largely confined to domestic roles, while the men exercise absolute authority. In the 1980 scenes, the play shows a more progressive and egalitarian society, where women have greater freedom and autonomy.

Cloud Nine is also notable for its exploration of gender and sexuality. The play features several characters who challenge traditional gender roles and sexual norms. Churchill uses these characters to question the rigidity of gender and sexual identities, and to suggest that these identities are fluid and subject to change.

Dramaturgical Techniques

Churchill employs a range of innovative and challenging dramaturgical techniques in *Bigmouth Smallwar*. These techniques contribute to the plays' disorienting and thought-provoking atmosphere.

One of Churchill's most striking techniques is her use of non-linear narrative. *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, for example, is structured as a series of fragmented scenes that shift back and forth in time. This structure reflects the chaotic and disorienting nature of the English Civil War, and it forces the audience to piece together the story for themselves.

Churchill also makes extensive use of multiple perspectives. In *Cloud Nine*, for example, the same characters are played by different actors in the 1880 and 1980 scenes. This technique allows Churchill to explore the different ways in which people's identities and relationships change over time.

Finally, Churchill often uses physical theater and movement to create a visceral and engaging theatrical experience. In *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, for example, the actors perform a ritualistic dance to

represent the battle between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians. This dance creates a powerful and unforgettable image that captures the violence and chaos of the war.

Themes

Bigmouth Smallwar explores a wide range of complex and challenging themes. These themes include:

- **Family dynamics:** Churchill's plays often focus on the complex relationships between family members. She explores the tensions between parents and children, siblings, and spouses. Her characters are often deeply flawed and dysfunctional, but they are also capable of great love and compassion.
- **Social commentary:** Churchill's plays are often infused with social commentary. She uses her plays to explore issues such as gender inequality, racial prejudice, and the dangers of political extremism. Her plays are often critical of the status quo, but they also offer a glimmer of hope for a better future.
- **Psychological realism:** Churchill's plays are often described as psychologically realistic. She creates characters who are complex and believable, and she explores their inner lives with great depth and insight. Her plays offer a revealing glimpse into the human condition.

Relevance

Bigmouth Smallwar remains a relevant and important work of theater today. The plays explore timeless themes that continue to resonate with audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Churchill's innovative dramaturgical techniques and her unflinching exploration of human nature

make her plays essential viewing for anyone interested in contemporary British theater.

Bigmouth Smallwar is a challenging and rewarding theatrical experience. The plays are not easy to digest, but they are well worth the effort. Churchill's plays offer a unique and thought-provoking perspective on the human condition, and they will stay with you long after you leave the theater.

Bigmouth Smallwar is a landmark collection of plays by one of the most important playwrights of our time. Churchill's plays are challenging, thought-provoking, and unflinchingly honest. They offer a unique and valuable perspective on the human condition, and they will continue to be performed and studied for many years to come.

References

- Churchill, C. (1979).



Bigmouth/SmallWaR: Two Plays (Oberon Modern Plays) by Ingrid Vort

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 687 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting: Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 294 pages

Lending : Enabled

Paperback : 112 pages

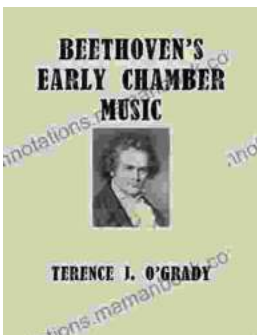
Item Weight : 3.81 ounces

Dimensions : 5.21 x 0.33 x 8.28 inches



The Legacy and Impact of Darth Vader: A Look Ahead to Legacy End Darth Vader 2024

: The Enduring Legacy of Darth Vader Since his first appearance in Star Wars: A New Hope in 1977, Darth Vader has become one of the most...



Beethoven's Early Chamber Music: A Listening Guide

Ludwig van Beethoven's early chamber music, composed during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, showcases the composer's genius and his mastery of the genre....