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Snow In August: Play By Gao Xingjian



Synopsis

From Gao Xingjian, a winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize for Literature, comes a "major drama about life. Snow in August blends Eastern and Western cultures. In form, there are elements of Shakespearean and Greek tragedy, but in spirit, it embodies a uniquely Eastern sensibility." •Gao Xingjian Snow in August is based on the life of Huineng (AD 633-713), the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism in Tang Dynasty China. Packed with the myriad sights and sounds of both the Eastern and Western theatrical traditions, the play exudes wonder and mysticism. The many koan cases and the story of Huineng's enlightenment afford the audience fascinating vignettes of Gao's vision of life and existence. It's an awareness of the Void and the need for a personal peace with oneself.

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Customer Reviews

Nobel Prize winner Gao Xingjian's play "Snow in August" is borne by an Eastern wind, quite different from what Western audiences would expect to see for a night in the theatre. The scholarly introduction traces Xingjian's influences from Meyerhold, Artaud & Brecht and points out similarities and differences. With more than 30 characters and much of the script sung, it would be a challenge to stage. Rather than having a traditional story, we see more of a philosophical development. To describe what happens, a monk named Huineng becomes a major Buddhist leader before his death at the end of Act II. Act III follows up and communicates that life continues with its joys and disappointments. I enjoyed reading the play because it was quite different. Xingjian creates excellent tension with many of his crowd scenes and short staccato dialogue contrasted with flowing

spiritually flavored speeches. Not knowing the music, it is harder to interpret the impact of the singing from just reading the page. All in all, this is an interesting reading experience that makes me want to become familiar with more of the playwright's work. Enjoy!

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