

A Play to Remember

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by Bob Greene

Like the unseen character Colossus, Remembrance Day was in a play in code. A story – we might think – about a war hero's exploits – but actually it was what happens to a war hero when the parade stops ... and they go home.

June Ballinger was powerful, articulate, charming, innocent, sexy, dramatic, comedic ... all at the same time telling the story of her mother. A woman who was part of Winton Churchill's elite force that helped crack Hitler's codes and win the war.

Wow.

But that's not the main point of the play. We meet the woman cast adrift in a time when women's worth was judged by the men and children around her.

It really was amazing the level of heartbreak and confusion Ms. Ballinger was able to convey regarding her mother's post WW2 life. It was like she was channeling her "mum."

Forced by fate to marry her third choice (the first two died) and live the life of an obedient housewife, we meet a brilliant resourceful woman forced to be nothing more than the movement within her husband's shadow. Ms. Ballinger hopped between characters and eras to show us the power that women have and how it has been squandered for decades by society.

Her own agility was quite stunning, dancing a British dance hall ditty as a young girl just moments after straining to kneel at a graveside as an elderly woman. Particularly engrossing was her portrayal of her mother's husbands and husbands-to-be. Each was so clear as to be standing right there – accent, posture, and all. Well done.

The ending to the piece was worth the price of admission as Ballinger breaks down and shows us the inner soul of her mother with a brilliant ending line.

The one-person show is only good when it can be accessed like it might have been in ancient times – a storyteller,



vested in the subject, shares deep thoughts and powerful parables. Not many of this type does that.

June Ballinger did ... brilliantly.