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Snappy, raw and heartfelt - the British way

Kristjan Saag witnesses a strong dramatic debut by Kristina Brändén Whitaker about a difficult and sensitive subject.

EXPECTATIONS | Kristina Brändén Whitaker | Gothenburg English Speaking Theatre | Played at Teater Trixter.

"In yer face-theatre" was a term for young British theatre in the 90s that loved to be openly vulgar and provocative in choice of subject and expression. Figuratively speaking, they liked to throw the dirt in the audience's face. Instead of stylised language and audience friendly safe storytelling, they broke away from chronology and stylised language and created theatre impossible to prompt, charged with the everyday vitality that had developed over generations on the island's pubs and different cultures.

I have been wondering for a long time when this non-Swedish, non-analytical theatre form would find its way here. Finally it arrived here a few years back thanks to GEST, The Gothenburg English Speaking Theatre founded by Kristina Brändén Whitaker, Swedish actress with ten years experience of the British theatre and her husband Gary Whitaker, English actor/director with roots in both The Royal Shakespeare Company and The Royal Court –the main theatres for contemporary British drama.

With her new play Expectations, Kristina Brändén Whitaker has as well as making her debut as a playwright, created a deeply moving and gripping story about two couples that in different ways deal with the shock of having a disabled child. She also proves herself in the British tradition with the living naturalistic dialogue, quick interactions, and humor, all of which are equally important as the strong storyline in the play. Therefore Expectations is full of raw heartfelt, snappy mentality. This dialogue is best demonstrated in the two British actors Sally Walsh and Nick Masons sharp dialogue. With Brändén Whitaker herself and Johan Örjefelt's dialogue in the roles as the Swedish Couple it's like Brändén Whitaker has written two different theatre styles to mark the couple's origins, which is very original. But probably the most important of all is that in Expectations there is a very wise psychology that is not highly prioritised in 'In Yer Face Theatre'. This is probably the most genuine Swedish contribution in this strong dramatic debut. **Kristjan Saag**

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