

INHERIT THE WIND

Based primarily on the notorious Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925, *Inherit The Wind* is a celebrated dramatic rendition of one of the United States' most sensational moments in its entire legal history.

Faced with the prospect of imprisonment for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution, Bertram Cates is forced to look on as his renowned defence attorney Henry Drummond (Kevin Spacey) defends not only his client, but the right of all US citizens to preach contrary to the word of the Bible. Facing Drummond is three-time Presidential candidate and Christian fundamentalist Matthew Harrison Brady (David Troughton) who is determined to defeat his one-time friend and rival.

As the people of Dayton, Tennessee gather to castigate Cates, preferring to lay down the rule of Lord rather than the rule of law, it is his romantic interest Rachel Brown who struggles with the question of whether to obey her Reverend father and her deeply ingrained religious beliefs or to defend the man she loves in his time of need.

With a phenomenal script packed with sharp, biting humour and mesmerising courtroom drama, *Inherit The Wind* will have you transfixed from the moment the curtain is raised. With a number of memorable performances from a particularly strong group of actors, it is to Troughton's credit that not only is he able to keep pace with Spacey, but never allows him to get comfortable as they trade verbal blows amidst the claustrophobic confines of the Tennessee County Court.

Whilst I find it hard to find fault with either the production or the delivery of such a finely-balanced work, the layout of the theatre and the depth of the stage mean that if you are thinking of purchasing a ticket then aim to sit somewhere in the centre of the Old Vic rather than the outer edges of the U.

Despite this being a legal drama of sorts, the language and dynamic of the play mean it is accessible to all those who haven't yet read Tennessee Rules of Procedure and Practice. Instead, *Inherit The Wind* allows each of us to pass judgement on the fundamental aspect pertaining to all artistic works - the right to freedom of expression. Perhaps, then, this pitch perfect play is the strongest argument of all.

Ben Lamy