"SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES"

Macbeth
by Rickmansworth Park JMI School
at Watersmeet, 4th March 2025
appraised by Iain Jones

It is my great pleasure to congratulate you, Rickmansworth Park JMI School, on your brilliant performance of Macbeth as part of Shakespeare Schools Festival this spring. It was a joy to watch you shine on your performance night, and I'd like to spend some time now highlighting all the aspects of your production that I loved the most.

This years 5 and 6 company treated the audience to an amazing start to the evening. From the opening image of hooded Witches sneaking through a heath of twisted bodies, we knew that this was going to be a creepy production. The stage pictures, and architecture of the world, were consistently imaginative and striking throughout the show; culminating in a powerful final scene where soldiers, camouflaged by branches, filled the stage as Macbeth's fate was sealed.

What a clever question to pose: who is controlling the fate of the characters? As the story developed the audience could clearly see that it was those menacing Witches. Like puppeteers, they manipulated the action, ever-present and foreboding. This was a wonderfully creative idea and one that the actors themselves thought of during their in-school workshop.

We could hear every word of the script as the young actors used their voices like weapons firing the language with understanding and intention. From ruthless and fearsome murderers to the dynamic couple at the heart of the story, every member of this young cast used both vocal and physical qualities to show the complex power struggles that weave through the narrative of this play.

This was a world full of atmosphere from creepy music to ominous bells and dramatic drums. As Lady Macbeth lost her mind, frantically trying to rub blood from her hands, the haunting echoes of the song 'In My Mind' sent chills throughout the audience. The costumes looked brilliant under the stage lights, with tartan sashes to conjure the spirit of Scotland, gold crowns to establish status, and Lady Macbeth's royal dress to highlight her authority. The ghost of Banquo and the Apparitions were truly unnerving in red lace veils with their faces illuminated by torch light. The final image of Macbeth's blood-soaked and severed head stripped of its crown was a haunting and theatrical climax to his downfall.

This was a bold, creepy and bloodthirsty production of 'Macbeth' – well done!

We are in awe of all your passion, hard work and creativity! What you have accomplished is something truly special, and we are already looking forward to reimagining Shakespeare with Rickmansworth Park JMI School again next year.

Coram SHAKESPEARE SCHOOLS FESTIVAL

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RICKMANSWORTH PARK JMI SCHOOL