

“SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES...”

Macbeth

by UTC Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park

at Magdalen College, University of Oxford, 1st April 2022

appraised by Tom Barker

I would like to send my sincerest congratulations to UTC Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park for your wonderful production of Macbeth as part of the Spring 22 Shakespeare Schools Festival. It was a brilliant evening of theatre, and I'd like to talk about a few elements that really shone.

What a fantastic performance! This was a brilliant ensemble piece in which the entire group came together to tell this story clearly with some fantastic stage images. I particularly liked the opening and closing battles, the physicality of the witches, the party scene before Duncan's murder, and the death of Banquo. All of these moments were illustrated with really strong images that guided us through the story.

There was a well-executed theme explored throughout the piece, of Macbeth being trapped in circumstance, on his own tragic path. I loved having two actors play Lady Macbeth at the same time. It helped to create this idea that wherever Macbeth turned, there was her voice in his ear, conniving and convincing. In the dance sequence at the banquet, the joyful circling of the revellers whilst Macbeth slow-danced with Lady Macbeth in the middle gave us a gorgeous image and moment that reinforced this 'trapped' motif. Having the witches be the ones who set up the stage also added to this concept – all these moments helped to give the impression of Macbeth's choices being controlled by external forces.

I was staggered to hear that these students had no previous drama or performance experience! Everyone spoke with loud, clear voices, and delivered all their lines with fantastic intention and good understanding of the text. The sleepwalking scene was brilliantly executed; I also loved the physicality of the witches, and the maturity and commitment of the whole cast was great throughout. These actors worked together as a fantastic team, who came together for each other.

This was a marvellous, murderous Macbeth from a committed ensemble.

Staging a Shakespeare play in these changing times takes extra courage, tenacity, and creativity. You should be incredibly proud of what you and your teachers have achieved.

I hope to work with UTC Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park in the future!

Tom Barker

**“A MARVELLOUS, MURDEROUS MACBETH
FROM A COMMITTED ENSEMBLE”**