

‘We are such stuff as dreams are made on’

The Tempest
by Clifton High
at Tobacco Factory Theatres, 19/2/24
appraised by Holly Meechan

Congratulations Clifton High for your fantastic reimagining of The Tempest as part of the Spring 24 Shakespeare Schools Festival. It was a thrilling night of theatre, and I'd like to shine a spotlight on some aspects I really loved.

I loved the opening sequence of your play set to the rousing Wellerman sea shanty. This served as a great prologue to your play, introducing the audience to the sea theme and to you as our company of storytellers.

You used your ensemble really effectively to support the story, including the gestures you created to highlight key words, moments and feelings in the plot and the brilliant sound effects and movements you made to create the world of your play. I particularly enjoyed when you all joined in the glug glug glug of Stephano's grog and the celebratory dance when he and Trinculo were reunited. I also loved how you all echoed Prospero's controlling movements to amplify the magical power he holds.

A real highlight was when the ensemble gathered and moved together as one big monster-like creature to scare away Trinculo, Caliban and Stephano- the reactions of these characters were great in this scene too. Equally, I really enjoyed the portrayal of the spirits - the eery rendition of Twinkle Twinkle, and the live flute playing from Ariel were very original.

You all landed your lines brilliantly, and the way you shared out the narration gave a real sense of you telling the story as a group. You took on the notes from rehearsal and worked hard to get used to the new stage space which paid off in your professionally delivered performance.

This was a magical and mysterious Tempest full of delights, from an enthusiastic and committed cast.

We're thrilled to have reimagined Shakespeare with you this year and have loved being with you on your journey from classroom to stage. We can't wait to work with Clifton High again in the next Festival!

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