

KGGS Governors visit form. Please complete and return to the clerk to governors

Link Governor	Diane Watson		
Faculty / Member of staff Visited	English Faculty Trip to Nottingham Theatre Royal The Woman in Black, Susan Hill Adapted by Stephen Mallatratt	Date	21 st February 2017
Purpose of Visit	Participation in Theatre Trip with Year 9 Pupils		

I was delighted to be able to join approximately 100 Year 9 Pupils and English Faculty Staff for a performance of The Woman In Black. It was an evening with much excitement and plenty of screaming! It is a brilliant adaptation of Susan Hill's novel and has been running successfully for 27 years. This performance was fresh and vibrant and illustrated perfectly the role of imagination in producing successful theatre.

Whilst Susan Hill's novel has a dozen characters this is a two-actor play which develops the original story. It is plainly a marvellous ghost story but the play illustrates beautifully the process of acting and the ways in which a given actor can assume the persona of another character and engage the audience in using imagination. We see in this play how, by adopting a different voice, a different stance, a different coat or a different hat, the audience is able to accept the actor as another character and engage the audience in the process.

As the two actors move back and forth between characters they use basic props to represent different places. A wicker basket becomes a desk, a railway carriage, an altar, a pony and trap and a bed. The creative use of sound, lighting and special effects transports us, through our imagination, to different places. It is very powerful and well-illustrated when Keckwick takes off his scarf and hat and comes to the front of the stage to ask the audience,

"And so, imagine if you would, this stage an island, this isle a causeway running like a ribbon between the gaunt grey house and the land' .

And we do, using our imagination; we are there in the scene.

The play is about how theatre works and what it can achieve. To quote the Director, Robin Herford, the play:-

"Celebrates, above all the art of the actor, of live performance, but it also celebrates several forms of theatrical magic-some simple, some much more complex. Lighting, sound, sets that appear to be non-existent, but then which reveal hitherto unconceived elements of staging".

It is, of course also a wonderful ghost story with an impressive ghost. For those who had not been to a live performance before it would have been a memorable evening. Students who are interested in theatre as an art form will have learnt much about staging and theatre skills. It was a fun night out, very well organised by staff and helpers and all running very smoothly.

As someone who quite regularly attends opera and theatre I am struck by how 'old' audiences are. This was primarily a young audience and I hope the experience of this visit might encourage KGGS pupils to become regular theatre goers in the future.

Thanks go to Roman Kealy and her team for including me. I had a great evening. The ghost was very impressive and very scary -though I confess I didn't scream!

Diane Watson 21/03/2017