



YEAR 11 ENGLISH EXCURSION

On Friday 17th June, the Year 11 English Advanced cohort went on an excursion to view a live performance of Shakespeare's 'Othello' at the Seymour Centre.

Although there were some delays and warnings of challenging themes, the performance itself was stunning, beautifully emitting a shortened but effective performance of the four-hundred-year-old play. There were powerful scenes where the actor's voices sucked out the air of the theatre, granting moments where the audience was left in silent awe.

Several aspects of the performance had been modernised. The play involved the use of mobile phones, laptops, and even electronic dance music. This subverted the expectations of the audience, but allowed for an interesting connection between the past and present. This also created a parallel between how Shakespeare directed his plays, with a variety of his plays set in Greece, Scotland, and Italy, but being performed in the outfits and environment of 16th century England.

The most interesting part of the performance was that the main actor who played Othello, was a last-minute replacement, as the main actor called in sick. He had only a few hours to prepare and get into a character that wasn't even his original role.

At the end, we had a Q&A with the actors and directors and gained an insight into what happens in the production of a play. Some of these have been captured below.

How long does it take to create and practice a play to perform?

They responded with that overall the process takes roughly 8 days to produce and practice the lines for performance. The director said this was a very short time to prepare.

I know you had to swap roles from Iago to Othello, how did you prepare for this both before and this morning?

We had each other's back and worked around each other by improvising and working well as a team. The team covered for me throughout the play and had to adapt quickly to the ways I acted the part which had not been rehearsed.

How much of the character is practiced and improvised?

I think that the character of Othello was really just human emotion, instead of acting I was immersed and swayed by the thoughts of the character. The violent scenes of course were rehearsed and shouldn't be improvised.

A funny moment in the Othello performance was when one of the characters took the pants off another actor revealing a pink with green polka dots underwear. Everyone in the audience roared with laughter at the classic sight gag.

Tien D and Sienna N

Year 11 students
