

'THE WHEEL HAS COME FULL CIRCLE'

King Lear

by Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School

at The Capitol, 1/3/23

appraised by Nick Taylor

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School for your marvellous interpretation of King Lear as part of the Spring 22/23 Shakespeare Schools Festival. It was a great night at the theatre, and I'd like to take this time here to mention a few things that I really loved!

The company had chosen some amazing music for their soundtrack, including the thematically appropriate "Crown" by Stormzy, Prince's "Purple Rain" and even the theme tune from the TV show "Blind Date"! Each track complimented the action onstage, enhancing the drama or humour of the moment.

The company combined several theatrical elements to create some incredibly effective visual sequences. A stand-out moment was the storm comprising of not only the actors themselves, but props: umbrellas with clouds and lightning cut outs attached, and sound making devices: a bin lid to be hit with a stick and a "Thunder Can", along with a giant tumbleweed rolling around in the wind! Also the battle between England and France being represented by a huge tug of war involving most of the cast, with the appropriate flags attached, was an ingenious idea. It really helped the audience to visualise the division.

This company employed silliness to great effect in what could have otherwise been a very somber and serious play. Right from the start, the play opened with one of the fools quoting the opening lines of Romeo and Juliet, to be told, "Wrong Play" by the rest of the cast! And once again their choice of props really enhanced this. With things like the envelope with "A Nasty Letter" written on it, to Gloucester, after having his eyes pulled out, revealing himself wearing google eyed glasses, you used these devices to great comedic effect.

A symphonic, sinister, yet very silly King Lear!

We're thrilled to back in a theatre with you again this year and have been so impressed by your commitment, bravery and resilience. We hope that you and your teachers are very proud of what you have achieved.

Looking forward to seeing Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School in the next Festival!