THEATRE REVIEW
A MONSTER CALLS

The final production of this school year performed by Years 9 and 10 was well worth the wait. *A Monster Calls* captures you from the very start. With a dramatic set and tense music, you feel like you're already part of the story when it hasn't even begun.

The play begins with our main character, Conor, as a baby. He is being rocked gently by his mother, the unavoidable elm tree looming over them. The time then skips onward to Conor (played by Brandon L[redacted]) as a Year 8 student. His father (Dan H[redacted]) lives in America, and his Mum (Aditi K[redacted]) is ill with cancer.

Unfortunately for Conor, his troubles do not stop there as he is being bullied at school. The bullies Harry (James Q[redacted]), Sully (Eva J[redacted]) and Anton (Anish G[redacted]) are loyally kept at bay by a girl called Lily (Bobbie D[redacted]), but her actions are not well received by Conor! That night, Conor is awoken by what he thinks is a bad dream, until he wakes up and the yew tree has come to life, telling him that it will return to Conor with three stories! Meanwhile, Conor's mum gets sicker, and his grandma starts helping out around the house.

When Conor falls asleep that night, he is greeted by the monster (Chioma O[redacted], Johnny E[redacted] and Oliver R[redacted]) who visits to tell the first of three stories at 12:07. The monster tells the seemingly romantic tale of a prince, his lover, his disapproving mother and his father. The story takes a turn when the prince murders his lover and tries to cover it up! Conor reluctantly watches, becoming more confused by the second!

The following night brings the next story about an apothecary man who wants to cut down the elm tree. However, he is being refused by the pastor who says the tree is too important. But when the pastor's children become sick, the bitter apothecary man refuses his services so the monster in the elm tree becomes angry and tears apart his house!

As Conor's mum becomes more ill and options for medicine run out, he becomes more and more angry. The third and final story is about an invisible man, not wishing to be invisible anymore. Conor realises the message in this story and the previous ones. Battling with his grief, Conor uses Harry, the bully, as a coping mechanism ... and a punch bag!

An honourable mention must go to the main actor Brandon L[redacted]. He brought memorable emotion to his character's story, which left some audience members in tears. The other main characters deserve immense praise for their exquisite performances and the ensemble members were also fantastic. Their physicality and movement was co-ordinated, powerful and emotive, and really complimented the folk-based soundtrack.

Praise must also go to all the backstage and technical crew. Everyone's hard work really showed! The biggest congratulations, however, goes to the director Miss Blacklock, who brought a fresh and dynamic interpretation to a complex and psychological drama. It was a thought-provoking performance that had me scared at 12:07!

Huge congratulations to everybody!

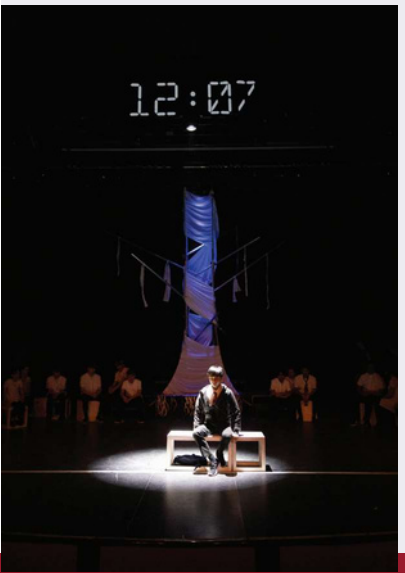
Amelia M[redacted]










12:07

