Review - *Pendragon*

Pendragon – this year's main performance of the RGS has maintained the high standard of drama which the school so proudly has. This time, Ms Irving – the director of many RGS plays – has utilised many more of the younger talents within the school and, as a result, the show was full of new, excited and vibrant actors.

The show – most of which was written by Peter Allwood – is about the death of Uther Pendragon, and the coming of age of his son, Arthur Pendragon, who spends the entirety of his childhood with his brother Kay and the charismatic King Pellinore – all under the watchful eye of the wizard Merlin. But Arthur has a sister, Morgan Le-Fay, who, corrupted with sadness at seeing her brother taken away from her, becomes the evil witch who ends up trying to undermine the brother she loves.

Technically, the play was very challenging to direct. There is a time gap of almost ten years within the storyline and there has to be a transition of the actors to show the growth of the characters. This is where Ms Irving used the younger actors to full effect, using two actors to portray the different periods of life in one character.

The performance side of the production was, as always, very good. Nick Versteeg's portrayal of the young and energetic Arthur fully showed the impatience within the young boy at becoming a man, while his counterpart, Jamie Allan, who played the old Arthur, gave a stunning rendition of For Years I've Given You a Light with James Hall, a natural at playing the mystical and majestic Merlin.

Ashleigh Carter was a brilliant young Morgan Le-Fay, her My Little Child, My Brother had the entire audience in raptures while Jane Wallace continued as a more powerful, more evil, and much more scary portrayal of Morgan. Morgan's polar opposite: Guinevere was also given a good casting; Pheobe Kemp played very well a naïve and innocent Guinevere and Louisa Smith turned Guinevere into a grown woman, but one who is still very much used to being served on, and has a hard time adjusting to married life.

The chorus should not be forgotten, they had many different roles to cover, from being a dark forest full of snakes, to a majestic white falcon. The overall singing was truly magnificent, and their voices entirely backed up the voices of the main characters, turning the theatre into a pleasant harmony of sounds. A special mention goes out to Mr Rhodes, who did a brilliantly funny cameo at the start of the second half, playing a dim-witted villager, who tries (and fails) to impress the girls.

The music was a vital part of this production (as this production seemed



to contain more music than most musicals) and once again, Mr Parker and his team of musicians did not let us down. They were very professional throughout the entire show, and although there was a lot of music throughout the entire play and at times, at difficult to judge places, Mr Parker co-ordinated the play brilliantly with the acting and helped the production in becoming a great success.

The set design for this play was very different (and more interesting) than the usual play. Usually, the back wall is the back of the stage, instead, in *Pendragon*, two giant pieces of gauze were put onto the stage in an upside-down V shape (opening up to the audience). There were many more effects, including the projection of an actor onto the gauze to show the killing of a giant. The gauze also had many colourful stained glass windows – thanks to Mr Edwards and his crew of artists – which set the scene to many different parts of the play.

The stage crew should also be given a big mention for this production. This was the first major production where moving lights were used, and this was a big success. The eight moving lights – operated magnificently by a very able Tom Clarke – added more layers of effects and depth into the lighting and combined very well with the play especially in the forest and lake scene, where the ripples of the water were represented by the slow rotation of the blue, patterned light. Thanks should also be given to Mr Warne and Ben Squire for overseeing the entire production and making sure the techie side of things went smoothly.

Pendragon was a very demanding plan, in every single one of its aspects: technically, dramatically and musically. And yet, the RGS performing arts crew seem to be able to take on everything Ms Irving throws at them, and this is just another example of the ever improving state of the performing arts of the RGS – we expect even better next year!

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