

## **Big Spirit report 25-26**

### **Macbeth**

We opened our season with one of Shakespeare's best-known tragedies, the Scottish play for those of a nervous disposition in early November. The kids were challenged with Shakespeare's verse but took it on with aplomb and I'm sure those who came to see would agree that they did a phenomenal job. We performed over three nights and had fantastic audiences. We opted for a simple set and costumes and gave the kids a chance to let the acting do the work and they more than pulled through.

### **Downton Shabby/Spelling Bee**

Moving onto our spring production, we split the group in half to perform a double comedy bill of Downton shabby written by big spirit alumni Hugh Roberts (to use his pen name) and directed by Evie O'Connell, and The 25<sup>th</sup> annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, a comedy musical, directed by myself. We challenged the diversity of our performers who delivered Macbeth superbly to find their funny bone and deliver some outrageous comedy that brought big belly laughs from all who attended. A big thank you from me to those who helped me put on a musical on a budget, which is not an easy feat, but it was definitely a success.

### **Blue Stockings**

And now we move onto our final show of the year which opens next week, in Blue Stockings. The youth group have trusted me with all of their production choices this year and are taking on every challenge thrown at them and the content of Blue Stockings is no different. They have done a wonderful job telling this vital and relevant story that is closer to home than you may think and I urge you all to come along and support them all next week if you aren't already.

### **Edinburgh**

We have a group of 13 children coming up to Edinburgh this year with another Hugh Roberts play, Shakespeare's Big Brother. An intense week of rehearsal next month will be followed by an incredibly exciting week performing to avid theatre goers and we will be sure to leave our Big Spirit mark on the city before we return to perform at the QMT for one night only. A massive thank you to all who have supported our fundraiser events in the quiz night and the pantomime all set up and run by the kids themselves. Also, a big thank you to the committee for their continued support.

### **Next year**

Pending all rights being acquired and no unforeseen issues with the bustling calendar, we are looking to perform 8 shows next year. We will have our main 3 shows as per usual, but we are also looking to perform twice more in the studio and three times in the

now cleared out youth wing with smaller casts to afford all of the children the opportunity to shine. We will look to steward, chaperone and tech all of these additional shows ourselves where possible, as we know that many of our fantastic volunteers are stretched as it is already. However, if you would like to support us in any of these areas, we will never say no. I hope to get full details of our season out to all members over the summer as it is a very exciting one with something for everybody so please watch this space.

### **Ensemble**

A quick note about our Ensemble group led by Evie and her team. The group is ever-growing and now boasts 20 members or so. They had terrific success with Oedipus which was very well received by the sell-out crowd that came to see it and are looking forward to a showcase post summer, exact date yet to be agreed. It is worth saying that this is a very important part of our theatre that bridges the gap between Juniors and Big Spirit and never lets any young performer fall by the wayside and have regular, high-quality workshops that feed into the rest of the theatre.

### **Thank you**

Finally, I just want to say a massive thank you to everyone in the Bancroft players who continue to show support of the youth theatre. Having been a member myself an indeterminate number of years ago, I know how much the youth group look up to and admire you all. So a big thanks for always speaking to us after our shows and being so supportive. On a personal note, a big thank you to Evie for helping to guide me through the ins and outs of putting on all of these shows and never saying no to an idea for a show, even when she probably should have. And finally a big thank you to a man who has given his life to this place and impacted more people than he will probably ever realise, Rory Reynolds. Being asked to step into your shoes with the youth theatre felt like a mammoth task as you have single handedly impacted and created hundreds if not thousands of talented performers. All of your support this year has meant the world to me and I hope you know that your legacy in Big spirit will never be erased. Thank you all, and here's to next year!