

## “DID MY HEART LOVE ‘TILL NOW”

Romeo and Juliet

by St John Baptist Church in Wales High School

at The Coliseum Theatre, Aberdare, 22/10/2019

appraised by Helena Devereux

I would like to extend my most sincere congratulations to St John Baptist Church in Wales High School for your tremendous production of Romeo and Juliet as part of the 2019 Shakespeare Schools Festival. It was an excellent night of theatre, and I'd like to highlight a few aspects that really stood out.

I would firstly like to commend this company on their teamwork. You worked as an impressive ensemble throughout the technical and dress rehearsals, as well as during your performance. You had a consistent professional level of focus backstage throughout this evening, fully supporting your on-stage colleagues.

Romeo and Juliet is obviously a very well-known story and we all know how it ends, however as an audience member I still want to hope. I want those moments of 'will they/won't they fall in love/fight/reconcile' to engage me until the end of the play. This is something that this company handled excellently.

You perfectly paced key moments such as Romeo and Juliet's hands meeting for the first time or when the Montague's & Capulet's have their initial confrontation. This built the tension of the piece throughout and held the audience's attention with those 'will they/won't they' moments. I was also struck by your incredible ending – in highlighting the 'what ifs' element of the play, you brought the tale to a poignant end.

This was a brave and powerful Romeo and Juliet from a mature, focused company.

Performing Shakespeare's words on a professional stage takes bravery, resilience, and creativity. You should be immensely proud of what you and your teachers have achieved in this Season of Infinite Variety.

I hope to see St John Baptist Church in Wales High School in the 2020 Festival!

Helena Devereux

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