

## “THE REST IS SILENCE”

**Hamlet**  
**by Bridgewater High School**  
**at The Contact Theatre, 13/11/2017**  
**appraised by Mark France**

I would like to offer sincere thanks and congratulations to Bridgewater High School for your wonderful production of Hamlet as part of the 2017 Shakespeare Schools Festival. Students and teachers alike have put hard work, imagination, determination and passion into this production, and were a credit to the school. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight just a few fantastic moments that you should be especially proud of.

- ❖ This was a brilliantly imaginative production with a number of striking and original elements, not least the decision to cross-gender almost all of the parts, including casting the company's sole male actor as Ophelia.
- ❖ The ensemble used movement and dance extremely effectively to create a constantly shifting physical world in which everything seemed unstable and nothing was quite as it seemed. The movement work throughout was excellent, and led to many powerful moments, from The Mousetrap, to Ophelia's descent into madness, to the final denouement, all supported by strong sound and lighting work from the student technicians.
- ❖ There was an excellent use of soundscapes from the company, with eerie whispering and a constant presence throughout, to create a visually stunning world full of gossip, intrigue and suspicion in which danger seemed ever-present.
- ❖ All the cast spoke the text confidently and intelligently, with real power and passion. There was clearly a high level of understanding shared across the ensemble, and the occasional interjections of modern language provided a witty commentary on the main action.

This was an original and bold retelling, visually stunning and passionately told.

**Congratulations to everyone involved in this superb production. I hope to see Bridgewater High School in the Festival again next year.**

**Mark France**

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