

Harlow - Mashed

Winter Wonderland Experience.

Bold choice for teenager's debut as a director

review

WOYZECK

Moot House Players
Moot Hall, Harlow

THIS dark, disturbing play examines the catastrophic effects society can wreak on the human condition, dehumanising and degrading the spirit until death comes as the only release.

Written by German dramatist George Büchne and translated by MHP's Michael Branwell, *Woyzeck* centres on the eponymous soldier who is hounded and harassed by all around him.

Sam Freeman was utterly convincing as the put-upon Frank Woyzeck, displaying an impressively wide range of emotions as his life collapses around him. His

tormentors include the clinical, psychotic Doctor who uses Frank for his experiments, the overbearing and cynical Captain who delights in humiliating him, and the salacious RSM who seduces Frank's girlfriend, Marie.

These roles were played by, respectively, Tyrone Samuels, Kerry Rowland, Dan Powell and

Hazel Owen, who all delivered powerful, effective performances. Dan also took the role of Frank's cheery friend Andy, intimating that Woyzeck is unable to trust even those closest to him.

At one point the audience took part in community singing led by Marie's friend Maggie (Maisie Humphreys, in fine voice) but it's a joyless experience as a drunken street mob taunts Woyzeck.

In the end, the paranoid and despairing soldier kills Marie and commits suicide. But even then he is unable to escape persecution as a member of the raucous mob (Joan

Lanario) stands cackling over his dead body.

Promenade staging brought the audience close to the action but without raked seating it was sometimes difficult to see and hear everything that was going on.

Nevertheless, 17-year-old student Harry Tennison was brave and imaginative in selecting this grim and challenging work to make his directorial debut. It was a bold choice, delivered with energy and enthusiasm, and bodes well for the future of Harlow's longest-running drama group.

Caitlin Foley

st john's arc
St John's Walk, Old Harlow

MUSIC Tomorrow's (Friday) Music@Midday features a performance by pianist Virginia Black, starting at 1.30pm. Admission is £4.50 including homemade soup and artisan bread with a complimentary glass of wine or juice (lunch served from 12.45pm).

ART *Art -A-Peel*, an exhibition of works by local artist Jim Peel and students from his weekly class, runs until Sunday.

gibberd gallery
Civic Centre, The Water Gardens

ART *Harlow Open 14* is one of the biggest exhibitions with the widest range of artwork the town centre gallery has hosted. More than 160 exhibits created by artists from Harlow and other parts of Essex are on display in a wide variety of mediums. The exhibition runs until December 19 and entry is free.