

Year 11 Classics theatre visit to Medea at Soho Place Theatre

On the 20th of April, my peers and I were fortunate enough to go and see Medea at Soho Place theatre, led by the Classics department. Since in our classics GCSE course, we learn about women in the ancient world and one example is Medea- as a woman to be feared. We have studied an extract of Medea by Euripides, and got to explore her as a complicated and fascinating character in an Ancient Greek setting. Upon finding out that this trip was being offered, my class was very excited to see how the nuances in Medea's behaviours and emotions would be translated onto a modern stage- and it certainly didn't disappoint. Sophie Okenedo, starring as Medea, provided a mesmerising performance from the very start, conveying Medea's emotions powerfully and making them tangible for the audience. Ben Daniels, as Jason and all other male characters, used movement and different costumes to shift between the different male characters in the play. His constant circling of the stage- and Medea- provided an interesting insight into the role of gender in the story, and the claustrophobia of Medea in a patriarchal Greek society. In addition, the Corinthian women were all seated in the audience, to make the story even more intense and include the audience into the turmoil and subsequent actions of Medea, providing a very moving and intimate feel to the production. The set used was simple but very effective, with all murder scenes happening offside to not distract from the subtleties created by the actors, and demonstrate the disturbing aspect of the play without becoming morbid. I particularly enjoyed the use of rain in the set during the climax of Medea's emotions, and then how the blood of her sons ran into the water, which had collected onto the stage, a very potent image to demonstrate the consequences of such powerful emotions as love and hate. The adoration of the audience was felt clearly by the immense applause for the actors at the end of the play, having been encapsulated by their artistry for the entire play. I thoroughly enjoyed the play, as did my peers, and give huge thanks to the Classics department for providing us with the opportunity to experience the magic created on that stage and deepen our understanding and love for the subject.

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