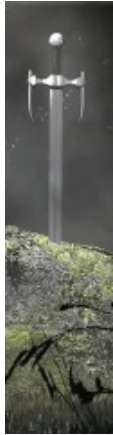




18 – 21 February 2010

From our Chairman Brian Pearce:



In welcoming you to a fascinating production it is my pleasure and privilege to introduce this Off Centre Youth production of *Merlin and the Cave of Dreams*.

This is a play cloaked in Celtic mysticism and wizardry -which in modern times has given us Harry Potter - where the author, Charles Way, depicts the old age battle between good and evil in the journey of Arthur from discovering the true identity of his parents to drawing Excalibur from the stone and becoming King, facing many difficult challenges on the way.

Co-directors Stephanie Harris and Jain Boon have boldly and creatively introduced the all-youth cast to the experience of performing a play couched in Celtic mythology, the conflict between chivalry, loyalty, honesty and mercy, and the medieval concept of an underworld of principalities and powers. This is a new experience for many of the cast but as the rehearsals progressed so did their enthusiasm and enjoyment of getting into their respective roles.

Those in leading roles shared such comments as 'I enjoyed the challenge of doing something difficult and acting out difficult situations,' and 'I loved being able to show off and getting into the part.' Merlin confessed 'My character is a very complex personality and I am enjoying trying to get into character.' All have said how much they have enjoyed working together. For the co-directors it was a joy having the cast regularly turning up for early rehearsals.

This play is the first of its kind for Off Centre Youth and so is the performance. There are no stage hands and so the cast are responsible for the shifting of props and furniture as the play progresses giving the cast real hands on experience.

Charles Way, the author has a lifelong connection with the Welsh borders and many of his plays and poems centre on the Welsh border towns. Indeed 'Merlin' was nominated in 2004 for a Helen Hayes award for the most outstanding play of 2004. Charles also has long standing connections with the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff where many of the costumes for our play have come from and for which we thank them.

Our thanks go to the co-directors for the very bold step of directing our young people in performing this very adventurous play and for those who have been responsible for costumes, staging, props and sound effects.

Finally our thanks to you for being our audience and supporting this Off Centre production and the young players. Information regarding Off Centre Theatre, past and future productions, membership and contacts can now be obtained on our web site, www.offcentretheatre.org.uk.



Now just sit back and enjoy our young folk at work for your entertainment with their presentation of *Merlin and the Cave of Dreams*...