

"Foul is Fair" in Corona Del Mar's production of Macbeth

by Roger Nguyen, a senior at Fountain Valley High School

"Something wicked this way comes!" Puppets to powerful witches, three clans face the repercussions of ceaseless ambition and villainous bloodshed after a murdered king is replaced by his power-hungry assassin. Set ten years after an apocalypse, Corona Del Mar's "Macbeth" retells the classic Shakespearean tragedy with a modern, bone-chilling twist.

Masterfully portraying their characters' descent into madness is Jeremy Tewari and Ella Avital, who create refreshing renditions of the iconic Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, respectively. As he becomes drunker with power, Tewari's awkward posture and reserved demeanor morphs into psychotic stares and unpredictable, dramatic flourishes. On the other hand, as she is overwhelmed by guilt, Avital's dominant tone and confident saunter crumbles with anguished paranoia. Tewari and Avital also have unmatched chemistry; each interaction carefully shows the power shift in their relationship.

As the masterminds of the show's universe, Savannah Harper, Sabina Martin, and Alaina Gauss play the Witches with mystique and fluidity. Their gracefully haunting arm movements and long strides make them seem ethereal. Gauss (Witch #3) impressively navigates the show while blindfolded, managing to climb onto platforms and catch props; this adds to the unsettlingly prophetic essence of her character. Other standouts include Sean Carroll Jr. as Duncan and Jett Collins as the Porter. Sean Carroll Jr., in particular, commands the stage with his smooth, domineering voice and authoritative attitude. Meanwhile, Collins' strong comedic timing and physicality steals the show during his cameo in Act 2 Scene 3. His slurred words and playful mannerisms make the Porter's drunkenness quite convincing.

The set design, led by Je Anne Hendrickx, is dynamic and enchanting. The rocky walls and careful foam work create a menacing setting and daunting atmosphere. Actors also have a variety of ways to interact with the set through the three archways and six staircases, making the show more engaging. The light design, led by Raha Khodabakhshi, contributes to the immersive, post-apocalyptic setting as well. A significant amount of thought has been put into each lighting choice; examples include illuminating the entrances and backdrop with different colors to indicate tonal shifts, and making the lighting on Macbeth grow darker as the show progresses. There are instances in which microphones face some issue, but the actors' dedication and the ominous background music make these hiccups less noticeable.

From its apprehensive storytelling to its committed cast and crew, Corona Del Mar's Macbeth is unforgettably bewitching.