



Prince William School: Matilda - a spectacular showcase of talent!

As an NSTA representative, I had the distinct pleasure of attending Prince William School's production of *Matilda* on 16th December 2024. Based on Roald Dahl's 1988 novel *Matilda*, the musical features music and lyrics by Tim Minchin and a book by Dennis Kelly. Prince William School's performance was a spectacular showcase of youthful talent, energy, and passion, brought to life by a large and enthusiastic cast. The show was a joyful celebration of imagination and defiance, beautifully captured by the talented students. From the very first note to the final curtain call, it was clear that every member of the cast had fully invested themselves in the production, creating a vibrant, engaging, and thoroughly entertaining evening for the audience.

One of the most notable aspects of this production was the undeniable energy exuded by the cast. From the smallest ensemble member to the lead roles, it was clear that every student was having a great time. Their enjoyment radiated from the stage and was infectious, drawing the audience into the world of *Matilda*. This energy wasn't just confined to the performance itself; it continued even after the curtain had fallen. When the final bows were taken, the cast could still be heard singing with excitement behind the curtains, a testament to how much they had enjoyed the experience.

The ensemble work was particularly impressive. In a show as fast-paced as *Matilda*, it's essential that every member of the cast works in harmony to maintain the flow of the story, and this cast did just that. The choreography was imaginative and well-executed, with each movement designed to enhance the action and add to the storytelling. Whether in the lively classroom scenes or the more intimate moments, the ensemble seamlessly brought the world of *Matilda* to life. Perhaps one of the most immersive and fun moments of the performance occurred during the song "It's Good to Be a Little Bit Naughty," when students broke the fourth wall and ventured into the audience. This playful interaction with the audience not only added a layer of excitement and engagement but also allowed the students to showcase their fun, rebellious energy in a direct way. The song itself was a raucous and joyful anthem, and the cast's ability to engage with the audience brought a new dimension to the number. The playful interaction helped to make the show feel even more immersive, allowing the audience to feel like they were part of the action.

The choreography itself was one of the standout features of the performance. Each dance number was dynamic and full of character, reflecting the energetic and rebellious spirit of the characters, especially in numbers like "Revolting Children." The choreography was not only well-suited to the story but was also inventive, with each movement contributing to the show's larger-than-life atmosphere. The students executed the complex routines with impressive precision, and their enthusiasm made every step feel fresh and exciting.

Matilda, played by remarkable young actress Jessica, carried the heart of the show. From her quiet strength to her witty charm, this portrayal was both subtle and powerful. The young actor's ability to bring such depth to the character of *Matilda*, showing both her



resilience and her wit, was impressive. She commanded the stage with confidence, capturing the audience's attention in every scene, particularly in her powerful moments of defiance and empowerment. Her performance was a key reason why the show felt so cohesive and emotionally resonant.

The portrayal of the larger-than-life villain Miss Trunchbull was another highlight of the performance. The actor playing Trunchbull embraced the role with great gusto, fully committing to the character's outrageousness. From the physicality of the character, with exaggerated movements and towering presence, to the voice, which perfectly captured the cruelty and menace of Miss Trunchbull, the performance was a true delight. The audience clearly enjoyed every moment Trunchbull was on stage, responding with hearty laughter and applause, particularly during the number "The Smell of Rebellion." The actor's enjoyment in playing this role was evident, and this connection with the audience created a truly memorable moment in the show. Miss Honey, portrayed with kindness and warmth, provided a perfect foil to the menacing Trunchbull, and the dynamic between the two characters was beautifully executed.

In addition to the exceptional performances from the lead roles, the supporting characters were equally impressive. The students who played Matilda's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood, also brought their characters to life with great flair, balancing the comedic elements of their roles with the more serious themes of the show. The chemistry between all of the characters was palpable, and this helped to create a strong sense of unity throughout the performance.

The set design was simple yet effective, providing a versatile backdrop that could quickly transform from the classroom to Miss Trunchbull's office to Matilda's home. The set changes were smooth and efficient, allowing the flow of the show to remain uninterrupted. The costuming was also spot on, with the characters' outfits helping to visually communicate their personalities, from Matilda's schoolgirl uniform to Miss Trunchbull's intimidating, oversized look.

Matilda at Prince William School was a fantastic production that showcased the incredible talent, hard work, and dedication of the entire cast and crew. From the energetic ensemble work to the imaginative choreography, every aspect of the show was executed with enthusiasm. The performances from the leading cast were outstanding, and the use of lighting and set design added depth and atmosphere to the production. The interactive moments with the audience, particularly during "It's Good to Be a Little Bit Naughty," made the show feel even more special and immersive. Overall, this production was a true testament to the power of collaboration, creativity, and the joy of performing, leaving the audience thoroughly entertained and eagerly awaiting the next show from Prince William School.

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