



SOMETHING **WICKED** THIS WAY COMES....

ROCKBETH

Shakespeare's Macbeth modernised and musicalised with a rocking soundtrack!

Following their roaring success at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in the summer of 2023, More The Merrier (the More House School drama group) were awarded the prestigious **Fringe Sell-out Show Laurel!**

The amazing show ROCKBETH had over 95% ticket sales during their tour in Edinburgh which is an extremely rare achievement, particularly for a school group. Congratulations to everyone who was involved in the production. The More House community is very proud!



Read about the show's journey from school play to sell-out show...











Tenors Un Limited help send Rockbeth to the Edinburgh Fringe

We were delighted to welcome the number one selling classical act Tenors Un Limited to MHS on Friday 19th May, when they performed at a fundraising concert in the school sports hall, helping to raise money to send our school production of Rockbeth to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August.

The sports hall had been magically transformed into a concert hall by the technical team of James Haigh, Neil Duprés and student Alex Carter, who had designed the stage lighting, and the audience had been completely transported.

The silken voiced tenors, featuring Jem (a school parent) and Paul, dazzled the audience with a diverse repertoire of classical opera and modern pop songs, including Nessun Dorma, Volare and Can't Take My Eyes Off of You. They then introduced the talented cast of Rockbeth to the stage to perform a medley from the show including songs by AC/DC and the Doors, backed with gusto by Mark Place and the Rockbeth rock band, before bringing the first half to a close with a rousingly punk 'God Save the King!'

During the interval, an auction, kindly organised by parent Alexandra How and her generous donors, was held with newly appointed Town Crier, Michael Stephens (another parent) ringing the bell in his historic accoutrements and acting as auctioneer. The lots, which included tickets to Weyfest, a case of fine wines, a hamper to pamper, and a week in a Snowdonia holiday cottage, raised another whopping £1,680 for Rockbeth. One of the highlights was hearing student Thomas Wall Morris speak with wonderful wit and passion about the holiday cottage, which has been in his family since his grandfather's time.

The audience enjoyed refreshments available at the bar and were in excellent spirits for the second half. More fabulous singing from Paul and Jem ensued before Lauren Patterson-Brown (Rockbeth's Lady Macbeth) joined the tenors on stage for a powerful rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone. What then followed will live long in the memory, as the tenors raised the roof with, We Raise You Up, introducing the school's Junior Choir who had been rehearsed tirelessly by Mark Place, and were conducted with great brio by Lizzy Hetherington. Finally, the choir, along with the cast of Rockbeth, supported the tenors, now resplendent in their Rockbeth t-shirts, for the soul stirring song From Now On (from The Greatest Showman) and there was not a dry eye left in the house.

The programme began with the Impossible Dream, which was entirely fitting as when the idea of taking Rockbeth to the Fringe was first floated in February, after its run in the Simkins, it seemed like it might be too ambitious a plan at too late a stage. However, with the tremendous support of the school community, its family and friends, and with Tenors Unlimited, we are making the dream come true. The Drama and Music departments are grateful for the astonishing generosity that is taking Rockbeth on tour to Edinburgh.

Mr David Aldred (Head of Drama)







Rockbeth goes to the Edinburgh Fringe!

Rockbeth is a fantastic show encompassing the brilliance of Shakespeare's Macbeth with inputs of legendary rock music, including AC/DC – Thunderstruck, Jimmy Hendrix – All Along the Watchtower, Eric Clapton – Knockin' on Heaven's Door and more...

I play King Duncan! I love his character - a strong leader who is respected throughout his kingdom, until he is killed by one of the closest people to him; Macbeth! Personally, I love Shakespeare's plays and ever since I first got my hands on an old Complete Works of Shakespeare from a bookshop in Rye, I became inseparable from the amazing stories. After starting this show, I soon realised that I was born in the wrong era - all the songs in the show are from the 70s to 90s and are some of the best songs from those eras.

Rehearsals are always the best part of a musical, with people coming together and belting their hearts out to their favourite rock heroes and letting themselves become at one with their character. Everyone is creating this production from scratch which, on stage, will transform into the entertaining tragedy it ought to be! I love it when we are starting a play or show and the whole thing just starts coming together. You see people having fun and the joy on their faces as they also feel the same way. That's why I love theatre so much. You can meet loads of people who generally want to learn more and perform shows and musicals so that the pure underlying message of that spectacular hour or two will seep into the audience's minds.

The show could not be complete without the fabulous costumes provided by Mrs Rashleigh, a talented teacher who holds the cast together and works so hard to combine items of clothing into costumes for the character, which really give the impression to the audience that they are not watching a bunch of school and VI Form kids - they are watching a show!

And we can't forget the amazing, talented Mr Aldred. He has performed and produced many musicals and shows in the past! When I heard he was going to be the new Head of Drama and Director of Rockbeth, I was curious and excited to see what he would do with the cast of MHS. And he has been nothing below exemplary. After Rockbeth, I can't wait to see what plans he has for us next!

MHS gives us the opportunity to transform our futures and to realise our true potential with the help of amazing staff. And Rockbeth allows us to spread a message to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival: that just because we have learning difficulties, it does not mean that we can't put on a good show!

I am really looking forward to bringing Rockbeth to the Edinburgh Fringe. The Space Triplex is an amazing theatre, and the surrounding area of Edinburgh is so exciting to me. Hopefully, with any luck I might get spotted, as it has been my dream from a young age to perform and do what I love to do - singing and acting, telling a story... These are things I can't wait to do.



Reuben (Year 11)











Rockbeth – a gem of an idea...



September 2022 brought the perennial question to the Performing Arts department of what show should we do for the Michaelmas term's Senior School production. Enter stage-left our new Acting Head of Drama, David Aldred, armed, as luck would have it, with a gem of an idea to take Shakespeare's Macbeth and fuse it with some classic rock songs to create a new musical called 'Rockbeth'. Auditions were held in the second week of term, running over three nights. Mr Place checked vocal ranges, while Mr Aldred and Miss Collington wandered about encouraging drunken porters, withering witches, and menacing Macbeths.

Within a week, we had a fabulous cast of committed young actors ready to give their all. We managed to secure the unbelievably talented Lauren as our Lady Macbeth and the up-and-coming ingenue Yasmin to play one of the witches. We were set –

Selecting the songs that would highlight the drama of the piece was more fun than should be allowed at work. The office in Simkins was second only to the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival in joy and decibels as we tried out this song and that..., each one sparking another suggestion or memory.

Bolts of tartan arrived by the lorry load, a second-hand garden chair became a throne, the washing machine ran non-stop dyeing everything within reach a rather gothic black and an initial 'look' took shape.

Musicians were performing to a standard worthy of the afore-mentioned festival, songs thundered out, dances were taught and an extraordinary soundscape was designed to open the show.

The show... and what a show it was! After the first night it was clear that this had to have another life and the only possible place it belonged was the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It is one thing to have the will and a show that deserves to go, but quite another to finance such a venture. Step up a cast of heroes, comprising ex-parents, current parents, grand-parents, friends of staff, and staff themselves. We raised an incredible amount of money, sufficient to secure a wonderful venue, lovely accommodation, and enough food to feed an army.

Watching the boys grow in stature and confidence will prove to be the highlight of my career. Working the Royal Mile, selling their show while decked up in full make-up and costume, they hit their stride, terrifying passers-by with a witch's cackle, performing magic tricks, singing, and dancing, all done with tremendous charm. The ticket sales shot up, to the point the venue had to open an extra seating area to accommodate the demand. The joy the boys experienced was so evident to all who encountered them, it was beyond infectious and, like the Pied Piper of Hamlyn, they reeled their audience in.

The cast, for the most part, went up to Edinburgh as boys, and returned as young men, with their heads held high and quite rightly so. They were magnificent.



Mrs Tracy Rashleigh

Here is some viewer feedback from the show at Edinburgh Festival Fringe...

Performed by a talented company of neuro-diverse high school students who are gifted musicians and passionate actors...

...We are planning on watching it again tomorrow because of the atmosphere and the music (everything was great). 10/10 absolutely amazing.

...The music was great (and LIVE!) and I was invested in the story the whole time. Loved the actors' passion, and the way they mixed Macbeth and rock...

...It was performed by high school drama & music pupils to a better standard than some of the shows we've seen this week that had drama trained adult actors!









What's next..?

**TWELFTH NIGHT
FEVER**



**EDINBURGH FESTIVAL
FRINGE 2024!**