

National Theatre Trip to see *War Horse*

On 28th November, all of Year 9 were whisked away to watch Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*. Excitement radiating from every face, we piled on to our respective coaches. *War Horse* was evidently a popular choice for everyone.

After being presented with tickets and purchasing all our necessities, including tissues, we unearthed our seats and settled down. The impressive auditorium was enveloped in mirthful chatter and laughter, and not a single seat was empty. Many were deliberating to what extent the play would adhere to the book, and others, not having read the book, busied themselves sticking fingers in their ears. Others were enjoying their purchases or begging for their neighbour to share. The noise was such that when silence fell I turned abruptly to find the cause for it. A gentleman clad in a pin-stripe waistcoat and bowler hat had walked onto the stage with an accordion across his person. The play had started.

War Horse is said to be the most acclaimed National Theatre production and from what I heard of my classmates' opinions they were all in agreement. As well as being a thought-provoking and moving story, it is an unbelievable play in itself. The ways in which war and death were depicted were awe-inspiring and the horse puppets themselves made you forget that you were in a theatre. The puppeteers made you believe that you were watching real horses gallop and canter and endure the ordeal that real horses did during the First World War.

The production was a poignant and effective display of animals in the war. We often overlook what they went through and this play was instrumental in helping us to understand their suffering. Our detailed study of the First World War greatly contributed to our appreciation of *War Horse*.

The attitudes at both the beginning and towards the end of the war were clearly portrayed with the enthusiastic and patriotic views gradually withering away into a hope only for survival and the war to be over. It also portrayed the belief that the Great War would be over by Christmas very well with the robust officers luring people into signing by saying they would 'be back in time for Christmas dinner.' I personally enjoyed the way that horses brought many together and when they used to think that Germans and British had nothing in common they were wrong. They both loved their horses. There is a scene in the play where a French child is chided by her mother for fraternising with a German officer. But later on all three are grooming Joey, our protagonist. This shows the attitude that was being developed- Germans are just people going through the same thing. It also shows what love for a horse can do.

We all enjoyed the production of *War Horse* very much and all agree that it was an unforgettable experience. One thing's for sure, those tissues were the best buy of the day!

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