

**The Tempest by William Shakespeare**  
NWTAC Theatre  
Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019

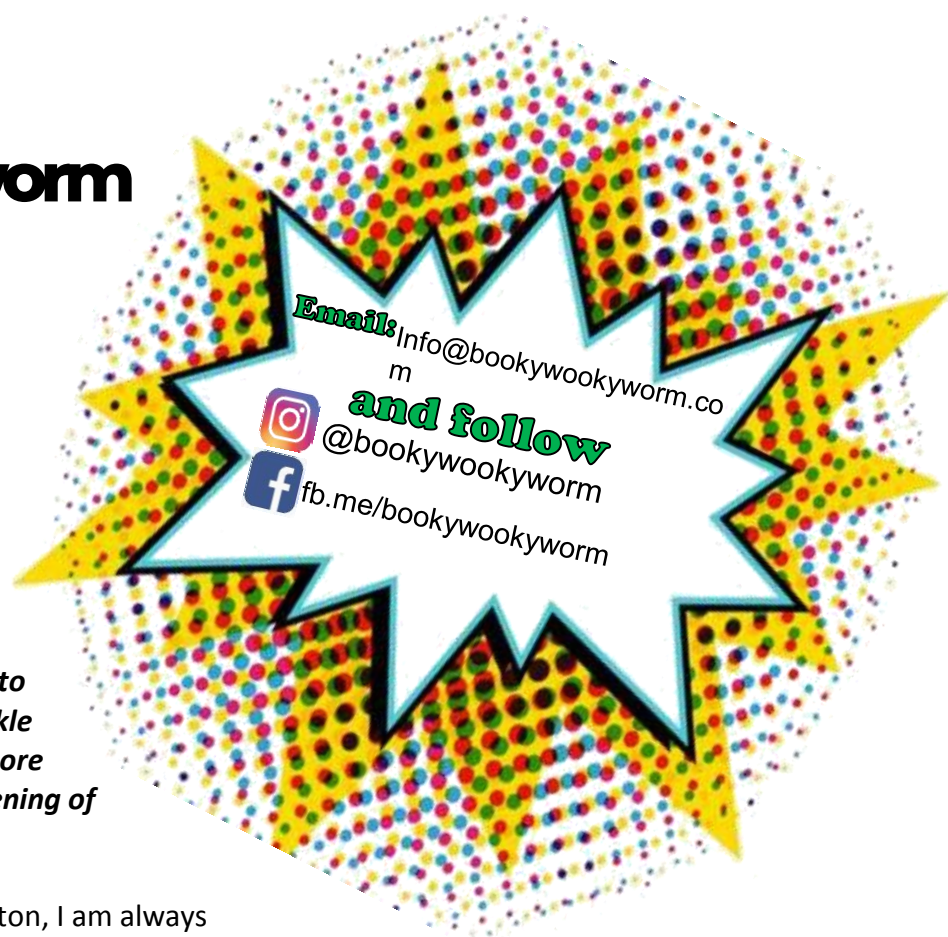
*A violent storm, a ship... wrecked, an icy and perilous island, an exiled leader yearning to be restored to power and a sprinkle of Shakespearian magic. What more could you want from a Friday evening of entertainment?*

Entering NWTAC's theatre in Moston, I am always astonished at the transformation from the theatre space to the setting of the performance and this production was no exception. Mark Beaumont and his team have crafted an icy and desolate space with multiple levels of staging that offer surprise and mystery for the audience. Combine this with the atmospheric music and sound effects; the audience are transported to Prospero's icy isle with added bonus of a lighting plan that gave us the feel that we were witnessing the natural magic of the Northern Lights.

Being from an educational background when I watch a Shakespeare production, I want to see the director finding modern day references and relevance that transcends to the audience. Prab Singh has done just that with this production the use of humour through the acting and production elements were not lost on the audience. There were a large number of primary school children in the audience who were transfixed on the action and elements of dance, but the comedy hit the mark too with young and old laughing in all the right places. There were parallels to modern box office hits such as, Titanic and Lord of the Rings which bridged the gap for young and old when building understanding of the language and the complexity of the characters.

I also want to see the actors showing understanding of language of the text in their delivery and characterisation. No mean feat for the young people in the cast but they rose to the challenge admirably. As an ensemble it was a stellar production but there were some standout individual performances to note. As the young lovers, Miranda and Ferdinand played by Lois Dibden and Owen Garcia showed maturity beyond their years. There was a regal poise to their physicality and a real warmth in their delivery together. You believe their romance and naivety but also typically of Shakespearian women Lois showed the strength in character of Miranda too.

James Valentine was held court very well as Prospero and had a light and shade to his tonality that pushed the narrative forward. He was enigmatic in his exchanges with Ariel and



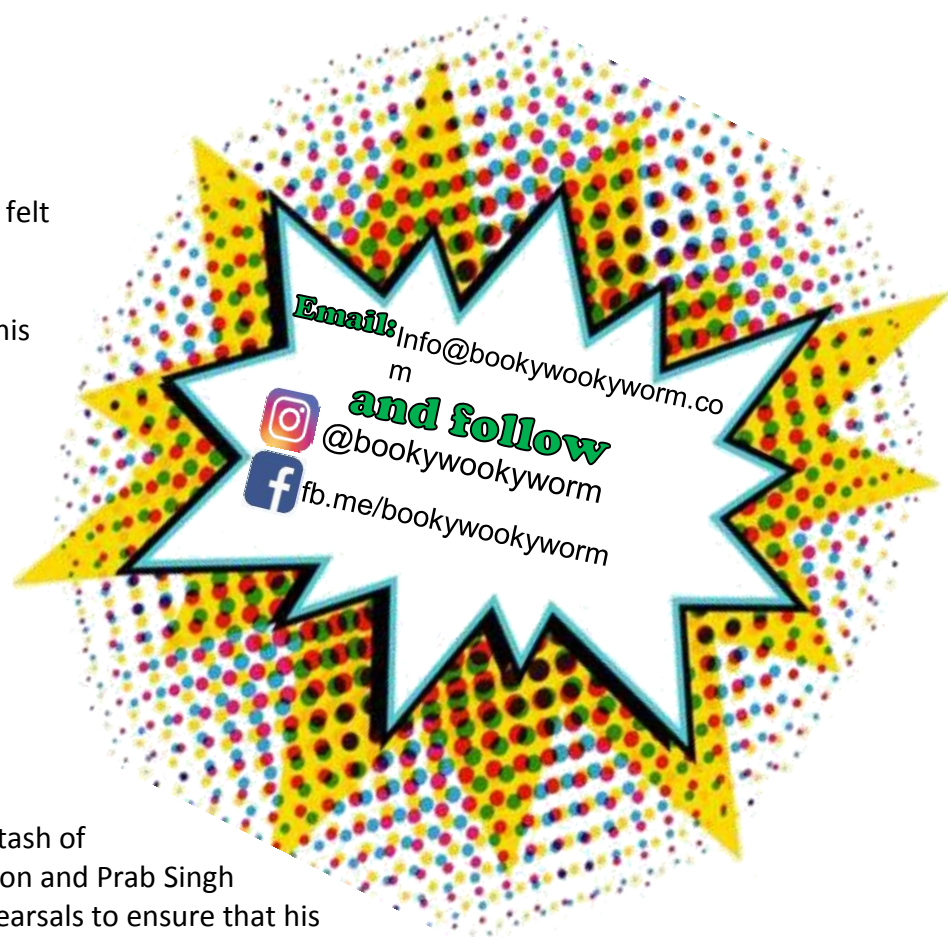
then at the same time you almost felt sorry for 'slave' Caliban who was 'tortured' by Prospero. Valentine certainly made the audience feel his frustration but also that he would wield his mighty staff if pushed.

Young Alfie Cook portrayed the drunk Stephano with great comedy timing. His understanding and delivery of the dialogue was fantastic. The partnership between him and the always exceptional Liam Watson (Caliban) made for some hilarious moments particularly Stephano encouraging Caliban to drink his stash of alcohol taken from the ship. Watson and Prab Singh have guided Cook well during rehearsals to ensure that his character hits the mark. I am excited for what the future holds for this young man.

The starts of the show were both Liam Watson (Caliban) and Eva Carty (Ariel). Watson delivered his monstrous character with ease. His characterisation had surprises up his sleeve that both horrified and excited his audience. The unpredictability of the character was shown through his 'Gollum-esque' movements and tone which made Caliban pathetic in comparison to the charismatic, Ariel that Carty delivered. Carty should be immensely proud of her performance of Ariel. Modern and charming she had the audience in the palm of her hand. Her comedy timing and movement around the text was exceptional and the young audience were completely entranced by her so much so that they cheered when she was set free and there were sounds of 'awwws' when she thanked her master, Prospero.

If you are looking for a production that delivers on every level and takes the audience to a new world filled with magic and mystery, then this is your show. The blend of new and old, comedy and horror are perfect for an audience of any age.

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