

See below our Young Reviewers' '24-hour challenge' reviews:

HYT production 'Girls Like That'

'Image'ine that

Often we forget the importance of treating others with respect and how we act ourselves. Harrogate Youth brilliantly handles this poignant message of how women have presented themselves and the way they've been treated within society throughout history and into the modern day.

"Snap, flash, poke" - the intricate use of quick lines spoken from different cast members all over the stage heighten the pace of the piece, demonstrating how quickly a girl's life can go from sweet innocence to damaging labelling. Humour is used effectively to break the tension, making the audience laugh with them as if we are one of the St Helen's girls. However, this only makes the end monologue more poignant as we question why we are laughing when somebody is being tormented by what the girls are doing.

The performance spans many years, as the St Helen's girls grow up from nursery right until their reunion in 2048! This demonstrates how the girls are bonded through a little piece of gossip, but in reality, that's the only reason they're bound together.

Incorporated into the piece are significant decades, including the likes of the roaring twenties with flappers and cocktails, to the swinging sixties with freedom and hippies. Each era tells a tale of how women are treated in certain social situations typical of the time. This play highlights women defying men, but also giving in to the social expectations that are actually put there by other women.

An insightful monologue beautifully draws together the message of how women are remembered amongst their peers and within society. This is fantastically performed by Issy Murray who captures the rawness and depth of this speech so impressively. Her character brings together the girls we see throughout time, as all the women are related to her. Making their history, her future.

Girls Like That shares a story on how we should all respect ourselves and most importantly each other. A message that is very important and should never be forgotten.

Girls Like That runs at Harrogate Theatre until Thursday 29th March. Box office 01423 502 116.

By Millie Golden Hope, Harrogate Grammar School

Girls like that

Girls like that was an interesting production, addressing a current political hot potato that will affect hundreds of young women all over the country. The production value for the play is surprising, with well timed choreography to break up the moments of tension and upset.

The mature themes tackled are surprising, even if the core themes aren't so complex they were delivered brilliantly without having huge focus on any one character, with the exception of the main character, of course. This created a huge variety for a compelling performance that keeps the audience engaged.

Now the production isn't perfect, as a few lines are dropped and a few awkward moments of confusion, but all things considered, they were only a blip and no performance is perfect.

The play is a fantastic articulation of modern and very real issue, thankfully addressed maturely and effectively.

Chris Booley, King James

Harrogate's young talent put on a contemporary performance with a powerful message!

What. A. Performance. The enthusiasm, pace and fluidity of a well-rehearsed show was evident from the start, opening with a complex dance routine, which recurs throughout this performance by the Harrogate Youth Theatre. This proved that the idea of the 'triple threat' is still very much alive and kicking (literally!)

The opening dialogue holds brilliant moments of humour, as the cast time their puns perfectly, and to great effect. This set the tone for the piece as a whole, a vibrant and youthful demonstration of theatrical prowess, carrying a strong message to an audience who may not understand the trials and tribulations of modern teenage life.

Physical theatre is used throughout, continuing to further the message of the piece, in a more abstract, yet equally effective style. The time and dedication put into this performance was evident in the fluidity of such complex routines. The cast used this more abstract movement to symbolise a range of ideas – everything from mobile phone use to a fight-to-end-all-fights. It helped brilliantly to convey powerful moments of theatre and emphasise the importance of particular scenes.

Flashbacks were all the rage in this piece, as we headed back as far as the 1920s for a rebellious pool party, before stopping off at a '40s airport, '60s camp-fire meet up and an '80s office. These all demonstrated small moments of misogyny and the marginalization of women was clear, which balanced humour and a serious message perfectly.

Scarlett's issue was a difficult one to consider, but the cast and team behind this performance tackled it head on. Her final monologue was powerful and perfectly summarised the circumstances, and the failure of her friends to help. The whole show was executed with skill and precision, and without doubt showed the whole audience the truth behind a simple selfie. A must see.

"Girls Like That", Harrogate Theatre, Wednesday 28th – Thursday 29th March

James Murtagh, Ashville College

You've Got Dragons

No dragon is more powerful than the audience at Harrogate Theatre

Based on the book by Kathryn Cave, Taking Flight Theatre presents 'You've Got Dragons', an informative, interactive and inclusive show targeted at young children. The show is centred around 'dragon expert' Benjamina (Axelina Heagney) who opens it up by introducing herself to us in sign language. Sign communication and audio descriptions are a pivotal part of the performance allowing everyone to get involved with the show regardless of their limitations. Ben's struggle with dyslexia when she attempts to spell garden and ends up writing dragen, proves to the audience how everyone has a dragon inside them no matter how big or small; it also teaches children that it's okay to be struggling and they're not the only one – a valuable life lesson.

Whilst the show does have to deal with some deep, emotional issues in a delicate way, humour isn't lacking from this performance. Rowan Talbot skilfully pulls of the roles of musician, dad, spelling teacher and bus driver almost all at once whilst also keeping up a hilarious audio description of creaking doors at the same time. We find that even through the amusing hard persona that Talbot portrays, inside he, too, also suffers from dragons. By asking his daughter for advice, the older members of the audience can relate to how people struggle mentally, regardless of their age, making this a show not just for kids.

Steph Back and William Grint, who play the dragons, are both deaf and what I love most about the show is how these actors don't let these demons (or dragons) be a barrier to them and are able to express their thoughts through so much more than words.

So remember, "no dragon is more powerful than you" ...

You've Got Dragons ran at Harrogate Theatre from Thursday 5th April to Saturday 7th April.

Lauren McGaun, GSAL