

## **Fountain Valley High's Macbeth is Hauntingly Tragic**

written by Raksha Rajeshmohan, a junior at Portola High School.

Nov, 2019

Macbeth takes center stage, gasping for air as his blood-stained hands tremble with fear and regret for the deed he has just done. This is the first murder of many as Fountain Valley High's production of Macbeth illustrates the extent to which power can corrupt an individual.

Set in the year 2057, this modern take on the classic Shakespearean play presents a society in which climate change and disease wreak havoc on the population. With encouragement from his wife, Macbeth seizes power by murdering the king. In order to keep his power, he continues to kill those that pose a threat to his reputation, and is eventually driven to the brink of insanity.

Taking on the challenge of playing the titular role was Michael Bell, whose commanding voice and authentic emotional responses made for an incredibly realistic show. Within minutes, Bell was able to shift from sobbing hysterically to laughing almost maniacally. Subtle actor choices like twitching hands and erratic heavy breathing in moments of panic elevated the performance to a new level of intensity. Acting alongside Bell was Crystal Martin, playing Lady Macbeth. Circling the stage like a vicious hawk, Martin asserted her dominance through devious eyebrow raises and icy cold glares even as her character loomed in the background.

Driving the intense plot were the three witches: Delaney Schultz, Lacey Heustis, and Katie Bell. Their perfectly synchronized movements, body contortions, and shrill voices made for an eerie performance, and their commitment to the role was unlike any other. Given the linguistic complexity of the show, lines at times were hard to understand, and could have benefited from clearer enunciation. One actor that did particularly well with this diction was Emily Montelius, playing the role of Lady Macduff. Her scenes were understandable and executed at a pace that was easy to follow.

Perfectly tying the themes of the show together was makeup artist Vivian McDivit. As Lady Macbeth slowly succumbed to madness, her red eye shadow got darker with every scene. Blood remained prominent throughout the whole play, dripping down from Lady Macbeth's wrist after her suicide and scarring Banquo's neck as he came back to haunt Macbeth as a ghost. Combined with the bleak costumes consisting only of dark colors, the grim mood of the show was perfectly set.

Tackling an incredibly complex script, Fountain Valley High did a brilliant job of producing a haunting rendition of one of the most well known tragedies in theater