

'AS MERRY AS THE DAY IS LONG'

Much Ado About Nothing

**by Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School
at The Gulbenkian Theatre, 22nd November 2022
appraised by Lisa Ors**

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School for your marvellous interpretation of Much Ado About Nothing as part of the Autumn 22 Shakespeare Schools Festival. It was a great night at the theatre, and I'd like to take this time here to mention a few things that I really loved!

It was wonderful how you captured the different elements within the play. This included the comedy within the story - I really enjoyed the well performed orchard scene, created by the performers acting as architecture. The joyful setting up of Beatrice and Benedick was also expertly done, along with the more serious scenes, capturing the drama and outrage of the events during the wedding of Hero and Claudio.

I loved the ensemble's movement sequences throughout the piece, including the opening battle - which gave us the backstory to the play, with the soldiers returning from war, dancing during the party scene at Leonato's home and that amazingly celebratory ending!

Your text work was excellent, spoken with great vocal energy and expression. This meant your storytelling was clear and worked well in the complex final scene when the confusion and deception within the story is revealed and resolved.

Your characters were all brilliantly distinct from one another. As performers you achieved this by investing in your physicality, using a range of gestures and creating clear reactions to the action in the scene. You worked as a team, which alongside the performers, was also excellently co-directed by your student-director.

Congratulations on an excellent and expressive production of Much Ado About Nothing.

We're thrilled to back in a theatre with you again this year and have been so impressed by your commitment, bravery and resilience. We hope that you and your teachers are very proud of what you have achieved.

Looking forward to seeing Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School in the next Festival!

**CONGRATULATIONS ON AN EXCELLENT AND EXPRESSIVE
PRODUCTION OF MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.**