

**“BETTER ONCE THAN NEVER, FOR NEVER TOO LATE”**

**The Taming of the Shrew**  
by St Stephen's CE Primary School  
at The Studio, Alhambra Theatre, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
appraised by Emily Chattle

Congratulations St Stephen's CE Primary School for your fantastic reimagining of The Taming of the Shrew as part of the Spring 24 Shakespeare Schools Festival. It was a thrilling night of theatre, and I'd like to shine a spotlight on some aspects I really loved.

You were bubbling with an amazing energy on stage which made for a really vibrant production. You burst onto the stage in your opening to “Shut up and Dance”, really setting the scene for us in this modern take on Shakespeare's story. It was great that you brought us home to Bradford, Manchester, and Leeds throughout your performance. I really enjoyed the ensemble actions to show you were in The Broadway, with basketball playing and fast-food eating. I also loved the ensemble actions to show we were in the music room at Bradford University, each of you miming the playing of different instruments. All of these moments really brought the stage to life!

Each of you gave super powerful, expressive performances. You delivered your lines with big gestures and voices, particularly when your characters were angry or frustrated. The ensemble worked really hard to boost this emotion onstage with great reactions. We heard “ooh”s, gasps, and even an “awwww” when Bianca and Lucentio were falling in love. This really emphasised the importance of each scene, drawing us into your world even more. I also loved the scene where Petruchio and Katherina first met. You had angry red lighting, a stage split by the ensemble, and emotionally charged performances. It was so fun to watch!

You also had impeccable comic timing, especially through your own modern additions to the original script. I particularly enjoyed the moment when Petruchio appeared in a superhero costume for his wedding, and then you brought even more joy with everyone dancing to “Gangnam Style”. I also have to mention your set-up of Manchester Piccadilly station, which was absolutely brilliant and funny at the same time, topped off with everyone exiting as a train, it was so funny and full of energy!

This was a joyous, vibrant, and expressive production with an energetic and professional cast.

We're thrilled to have reimagined Shakespeare with you this year and have loved being with you on your journey from classroom to stage. We can't wait to work with St Stephen's CE Primary School again in the next Festival!

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