

Bevis – what a performance!



This review was kindly written by author Dr Lynn Forest-Hill, who penned the book of *Bevis of Hampton*, a translation of the 14th century story. Lynn was present on the VIP night of *The Legends of Sir Bevis* at The Berry Theatre, selling copies of her book and watching the performance afterwards. Her thoughts are below:

By [Lynn Forest-Hill](#)

"I am still happily digesting the play to which I was invited on Thursday evening. The venue was The Berry theatre and the play was called The Legends of Sir Bevis. In the most positive sense I can truly say 'What a performance!' As a schools' production it was outstandingly good. Matt Beames has done a wonderful job of creating the script – it is crisp, witty and fun – an admirable adaptation of the long and complex 14thC story, well-suited to the young performers. The teachers and directors who created the performance had also done marvellous work, and all the young people carried off their ever-changing roles with confidence.

The frequent changes of performers who took the major roles worked beautifully, not only sharing the burden so no one had a great number of lines to learn, but also ensuring that no one was wholly identified with one role and no one had greater claim to be a hero or a monster or a king.

The use of puppetry was delightful for Arundel the horse, and the detachable head of the monstrous boar was perfectly achieved. I might have encouraged the use of a mask for Ascupart, but the creation of both the serpent and the dragon using choreography and mime was very effective. I don't know if performers and directors had taken account of the story-within-the story in which the dragon Bevis fights is actually a wicked war-lord transformed into a dragon but the unconcealed human element in the performance dragon's creation echoed this for me.

The whole performance and its development within the schools will, I understand, be

available online as a teaching resource. I can certainly recommend it!

To discover more about how the play fits into the ongoing Road to Agincourt project

 *see www.roadtoagincourt and to keep in touch with online developments of this excellent dramatic production see www.theberrytheatre.co.uk"*

(Lynn's blog can be found [here](#).)