

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](#).)