

Prisoner of Hope : Mandela's story

On Friday, November 8th, both classes of 2GT7 and 2GT3 had the opportunity to go watch a play at Fabrikthéâtre in Avignon called *Nelson Mandela, prisoner 46664* written and performed by the company "Théâtre en anglais".



First of all, the plot is about Nelson Mandela's life. The play starts at the end of his life in 2013. Mandela hears voices in his head that lead to a flashback which starts in his childhood, more precisely when he was in elementary school, and then goes on chronologically. There are a lot of dialogues, but also monologues and songs. The plot focuses on Mandela's fight, with his ups and downs, and all the difficulties he faced. Therefore, the climax of the play is when Nelson Mandela is released after twenty-seven years in prison. To sum up, the structure of the play is really well-organized and submerges the public into this amazing life story. The play is built in flashback that helps to easily understand the play with dates, titles and songs

Now, let's speak about the staging, set design and lightning.

Overall the stage layout was pretty minimalistic with only a few props on the scene that stayed for the whole play, like a bench for example. The decor was also composed of a screen which showed information and pictures of the places where the story happened. We could also see symbolic elements like the cell prison that was represented by a rectangle of adhesive tape. The dimension was 2 meters by 2 meters. Then, to move on the lightning, lights helped us understand the context. There were lightning effects to represent day or night too. Also, during the moment when Mandela was in jail, he was in a really small white square made out of white tape that represented the real size of its jail, there was a spotlight pointing at him.

We saw four comedians, there was a woman who played all the important women in Mandela's life (his mother, his wife, his daughter). Moreover, a man played Nelson Mandela during the entire play, and another man who played Mandela's friend. Finally, there was a white man who played all of the roles that symbolized racism in South Africa during the apartheid. Afterwards the comedians spoke really well and quite loudly which kept us focused on the play and thanks to their intonations we could follow the play better. All in all as for their playing skills, we can say that they were fully in their characters and we could see Nelson Mandela's life through the play.

Now, we're going to present you the costumes of the play *Prisoner 46664*. In this show the outfits are realistic and adapted to each character. During the play, the characters don't change their outfits whereas Nelson Mandela and his friend William change their attires several times. At the beginning, when Nelson Mandela was a child, we could see him wearing a simple white outfit. His parents wear traditional costumes made with wax African fabric. The teachers (and Nelson Mandela's future wife in the play) wear the same outfit that is composed of a sort of a typical yellow African dress. Then, when Mandela grew up, the costumes changed and became "softer" and casual. In our opinion, the costumes were really representative of African culture.

There were sounds effects such as car sounds, chats in the background and prison sounds (keys, locks and doors). So it made the play more realistic. Also, the voices of the comedians were loud and clear and even in the backstage we could hear them. The comedians tricked us by using fake microphone but it was just them who spoke louder. Between every scene we could hear a song which was sung a Capella with only body clap, so it sounded like a soundtrack. We understood what they were saying because their voices were clear

Written by the Seconde 7

