

# Great Expectations Review

*Tim McLaclan Year 12*

Ms Lindley's work on SPX's 2019 production of Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations" truly was 'great'. The Pius-Mercy collaboration masterfully reworked the classic piece of literature into an engaging and emotional production that was broadcast through the harmonious relationships between actors onstage. The titular character of Pip was portrayed convincingly by Alec Ramsbottom and Ben Cullen respectively, providing a corresponding level of sophistication and roughness that enhanced the level of characterisation for the audience. Ms Lindley used lighting and her trusty fog machine to create foreboding, sinister atmospheres, as well as incorporating rhythmic blue reflections off the smoke and flashing lights to construct an enchanting water scene. The dynamic use of accents were integrated into character dialogue to produce a sense of authenticity, transporting the audience from the production in Chatswood to the bustling streets of 19<sup>th</sup> century London and the wind-driven marshes of South-East England. The chorus of the performance were the glue that held the production together, their embodiment of Pip's internal thoughts helped project the key messages of the play to the audience and provide crucial insight into Pip's perspectives in each scene. The play maintained its engagement through the use of multiple musical numbers, including a very "Stomp"-like piece, that had the audience tapping their feet and singing along with the characters in the pub (don't worry, no drinks were consumed). Louise Frost and Betsy Walker's portrayal of the eccentric and traumatised Miss Havisham was a sight to behold. Who knew that an audience of adults could be so anxious yet intrigued every time her character took to the stage? The minimalistic staging, excluding Miss Havisham's eerie veil-like corner, allowed the actors to shine as a cohort as they incorporated beautiful physicality to express the scenes, especially in the dance scenes which included the entire cast and captivated the audience through the Victorian atmosphere the scene provided. The 2019 production served as an excellent medium to express the concepts and ideas present in Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations", and under the faultless and experienced eye of Ms Lindley, was a spectacular play that deserves all the praise it receives. Well done to the cast, crew and especially Ms Lindley, outstanding job.

