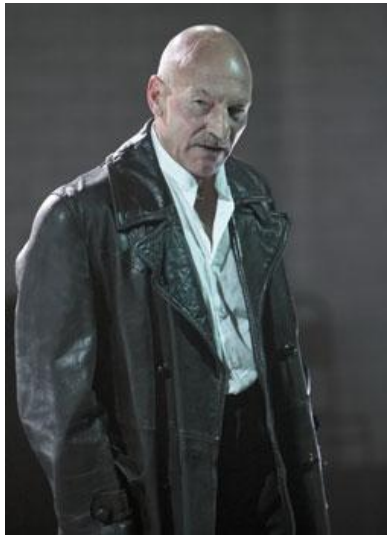


## Macbeth Trip

In November 8(1) had the privilege of seeing Patrick Stewart perform *Macbeth* at The Gielgud Theatre, London. This is Katherine Macfarlane's review:

The play was set in a stark, grimy, once-white room, with damp seeping through the walls; the rickety, clanking lift announced the arrival of many a sinister character.

When we first met the witches they were insignificant, thoughtful nurses, tending a wounded soldier in a frantic field hospital. We only saw them in their true light when they strapped a mask to a helpless patient's face, injected some kind of gas into it and silently watched as he writhed in agony, his hands clawing at the mask in futility, until the last spasm of his life was wrenched away.



Patrick Stewart was superb as Macbeth. He gave us a sense of pity for the character - the puppet of the witches who were ever present, either as nurses or as Macbeth's silent, scheming kitchen staff and servants. Lady Macbeth and her husband showed believable emotions as she bullied and taunted him to commit murder. We witnessed her inability to cope with the reality of the crime and saw her try to wash an imaginary spot of blood from her hand with bleach. This strong-willed and powerful woman was gradually reduced to a wreck of nerves and madness before our eyes.

The murders were brilliantly staged. Banquo encountered his assassins on a crowded train and the terror of the Macduff family slaughter was created by the simple yet spine-chilling sound of a length of gaffer tape being ripped off the roll. Macbeth's own murder seemed to neatly tie up all loose ends when the witches entered and Macduff froze for a second. Macbeth's dagger clattered to the ground in the terrible moment of realisation about the supernatural women whose words he had trusted completely.

The technical effects were amazing and enhanced the feeling of tension and terror. Grainy images were projected on the back wall, giving an eerie effect and the harsh machine gun fire was enough to make the already highly-strung audience members jump out of their skins.

The play ended and I clapped until my arms hurt – half for enjoyment of the play and half in relief that the horror was over.

Written by Katherine Macfarlane