

MEDIATION WORKSHEET

Oral Intralinguistic Activity Theatre Review

Your friend is going to London on holiday and has asked you for some recommendations on what to do while there. You know your friend likes going to the theatre, so you suggest going to see a West End show. You recently read this review of the *Billy Elliot* musical as part of an assignment for your English class.

Send an audio WhatsApp message to your friend and tell him/her about the show, summarising the key points of the review and giving your own impressions of the show from the review, advising your friend accordingly. Your talk should be approximately three minutes long.

BILLY ELLIOT

Given that it has been adapted from the film of the same name, it is no surprise that the musical version of Billy Elliot is full of cinematic suspense. Set against the backdrop of the miners' strike in 1980s Britain, the plot revolves around a young boy who rejects his father's moves to push him into boxing in favour of ballet lessons; a decision which initially causes conflict in his family but which eventually leads him to fame and fortune.

The beautifully choreographed drama unfolds in a tense, gripping manner and the stage is exploited to the full. The scenes that alternate between Billy's ballet lessons and his father's battles against the police on the picket lines at the mine are particularly powerful. The sets are incredibly evocative and capture the mood of social unrest excellently, transporting the audience to another time and place.

When one stops to consider the extreme youth of its main star – Nat Sweeney, who plays Billy, is only twelve years old – the show becomes even more remarkable. Nat is dazzling and I found myself unable to take my eyes off him for the whole performance. He brings a vulnerability and tenderness to the role that left many in tears.

If I do have a criticism, then I suppose it would be the music, written by pop legend Sir Elton John. Whilst it is often uplifting and anthemic, it does start to feel somewhat formulaic after a time. Therein lies the other slight problem – at just over three hours, the show is perhaps 30 minutes too long. By the time the excellent cast had received three standing ovations, I'd been in my seat for almost 200 minutes!

Regardless of these minor flaws, this is nevertheless an outstanding spectacle and a must-see for anyone keen on contemporary musicals.