

Mysterious series of murders in the mental hospital

The secondary school class 3Pb performed the crime comedy 'Murder At The Asylum' by Peter De Geesewell – in English and with quirky ideas.

By Reto Wehrli

Anyone who learns English with Peter R. Füg inevitably conquers the stage: in their 8th school year, the classes of the secondary school teacher will perform a play written in English. This year it was the turn of the 21 young people of 3Pb. Last weekend they presented the four-act play Murder At The Asylum. The stage in the Fröschmatt auditorium had been transformed into a psychiatric institution for the occasion: Dr James McLeod (Stefan Ammann) runs an expensive private clinic in Killin, Scotland (!). He only accepts patients who think they are a celebrity and treats them with unconventional methods.

Famous names of the dead

A series of mysterious deaths has occurred in this institution: 'Napoleon', 'Marie Curie', 'Lord Nelson' and 'Marie Antoinette' have already passed away in strange accidents. 'Adolf Hitler' is shot as the latest victim in front of the audience. Luckily, 'Sherlock Holmes' happens to be passing by – but he also turns out to be a patient, and a little later, 'Marilyn Monroe' dies from poisoned tomato juice.

It is high time that a real investigator took on the case: Inspector Grant does not hesitate to arrest the wrong man – he suspects Dr McLeod of being the culprit because he inherits his patients' fortunes. Fortunately, Grant's assistant, Miss Soames, who has just graduated from police school, is sensible enough to listen to 'Sherlock Holmes', who, of course, has long since uncovered the trail of the real murderer.

The audience was also able to play detective: before the denouement in the fourth act, notes with suggested solutions could be handed in. In each performance, a winner of English tea biscuits was drawn from among the correct guesses...

Learning by acting

The performance of the 3Pb thrilled with an entertaining story, well-placed gags, dialogue full of innuendo, a sovereign handling of the foreign language by the 14 actresses and actors, and roles cast appropriately. Teacher Peter R. Füg deserves a great deal of the praise, because none other than himself hides behind the author pseudonym 'Peter De Geesewell'. His comedy of errors, adapted to the personalities and talents of his students, sparkled with quirky ideas and macabre wit - very British indeed.

But the class had already achieved the actual learning objective before the performances: the preparations for these took place over two intensively used weeks, one of which the 3Pb spent in the Flumserberge mountain camp. Here the texts were learnt and rehearsed with the help of two

English-speaking acquaintances in polished Anglo-Saxon diction. And it wasn't long before the kids were chatting with each other in the foreign language as well. 'The young people spoke more English in those two weeks than they usually do in an entire school year,' said Peter R. Füg, summing up the didactic success of the creative endeavour. This is what makes lessons really fun!

Translated from German

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