

# THE STAGE:

## Metamorphosis

Published Monday 14 November 2011 at 10:27 by Susan Elkin

This version of Kafka's extraordinary story about Gregor Samsa who wakes up one morning to discover he's turned into a hideous, repugnant insect, has a dreamlike quality, powerfully evoked by immaculately slick, highly imaginative physical theatre.

Talented Stuart Walker as Gregor is lithe and sinister as well as anguished and crazed and the trick with the false legs to enable him to defy gravity like an insect is an inspired idea. Katharine Hurst gives us a brittle rhythmic, comically exaggerated Mrs Samsa and the outstandingly versatile David Sayers is forceful as Gregor's father. Gloriously grotesque but disconcertingly convincing masks allow the cast of three to play four parts because Gregor also has a younger sister. And between them they give us several impeccably characterised unmasked characters too, slick multi-roling, being one of the many Brechtian and Berkoff-style techniques they want to demonstrate to their audiences.

The sharp, often menacing, sound effects work well as an accompaniment to mime and action. They include the sound of a door opening, a siren of panic, the ongoing chewing of Gregor's insect jaws, ticking clocks, a heart beat and much more. There is no realism in any of this but that is exactly the point Hurst and her cast is trying to make. Innovative theatre - influenced by Artaud, Brecht and Berkoff, but actually not enslaved to any of them - at its most watchable.

### Production information

**Chelmsford High School for Girls, Chelmsford**, November 10-April 27

Authors:

Franz Kafka, adapted by Katharine Hurst and Kelly Taylor-Smith

Director:

Kelly Taylor & Katharine Hurst

Producer:

Scene Productions

Cast:

Katharine Hurst, David Sayers, Stuart Walker

Running time:

1hr