

Ecclesall Theatre Company present

Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

At Ecclesall Parish Halls May 12th – May 16th 2026

Adapted by Paul Voodini from the original material by Robert Louis Stevenson

Directed by Kiera Rhodes

Assistant Director and Writer Paul Voodini

Ecclesall Theatre Company step into the unknown with a new adaptation of the well known story of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde not only the premiere of this new script to this old established theatre company but a national premiere. When creating a new piece of theatre there are so many hurdles to jump but even more when putting a new twist to such a story. The title needs no explanation though written first in the late 1800s its gothic depth has stood the test of time. The title alone is still used today when referencing a situation or a person with two distinct characteristics. Outwardly good natured with an evil hidden side. From prose to drama to a musical all with the deep dark undertone set in the dank and dreary depths of London. The mood for this production is set the moment the audience see the stage with the darkness of a London street, flickering lights along with excellent lighting and smoke genuinely creating those awful smog's of the time. This production unlike many before cleverly uses two characters as Jekyll and Hyde, both creating those distinctive traits and cleverly directed and performed.

My compliments go initially to Paul Voodini who wrote this excellent piece along with Kiera Rhodes who gave the actors the direction to bring this to the stage. Certainly not an easy task with the twists and turns of the play, along with a comparatively small principal cast well supported by smaller cameo roles. Irrelevant of how good the writing without actors who can deliver you have nothing .

In this production the equal ability of the five main actors was quite exceptional. Each with so many differing emotions along with sometimes lengthy monologue pieces delivered not only with ease but with total conviction and full of meaning. Dr Henry Jekyll performed by David Barton, the brilliant doctor with visions of changing mankind, but with torn feelings and an obsession to drink. Your poise and demeanor cleverly portrayed, you clearly became Jekyll making the part totally convincing. Edward Hyde performed by Daniel O'Kay the sinister side to the piece, totally enthralling and owning the stage with every appearance. Your posture and disciplined performance were really well delivered and performed. Detective Inspector Enfield performed by Graham Millar, the long serving London Detective with an eye for all but more importantly a nose for evil, Sniffer by trade and nickname. A powerful role performed well, with a clear accent maintained throughout, however not quite perceiving the outcome that unraveled. Mr. Gabriel Utterson performed by Tom Pymer another brilliantly performed role. A Lawyer by profession but was he the gentleman he purported to be, strange middle of the night walks not quite what you would expect from one so eminent. Was there more to

his life long friendship with Jekyll or his late-night walks? The opening of Act 2 as you delivered a monologue under an Umbrella, during a storm, truly moving. Police Constable Carrier performed by Tom Davis, the local beat bobby, lovely character part with well chosen asides of uncertainty as you attempted to keep up with the goings on in Jekyll's house. Smaller cameos by Rose the Street Girl performed by Hal Grayson and Mary, Dr Jekyll's Maid performed by Olivia Geddes both well delivered and sung not forgetting those terrifying screams. Completing the smaller roles but none the less integral Nick Rousseau, Anthony Garbett and Rach Howard. Whilst predominantly silent you along with the back stage team switched the sets on a number of occasions seamlessly and efficiently allowing the production to run without interruption.

The costumes totally fitting the period, the set so simple but so effective, the furniture items adequate to differentiate the scenes, an odd item possibly a little new for the period but understandably difficult when the play is set so long ago. The sound and lighting by Richard, Kiera and Jon was brilliantly undertaken giving such atmosphere to the differing scenes. This production whilst being dark allowed for genuine laugh out moments. A small point when actors were positioned upstage to lift and project more so those valuable lines can be clearly heard. I really enjoyed how you moved the scenes backwards and forwards, introducing and re introducing past and present situations, very cleverly written and performed, even allowing for a reference to Frankenstein when Jekyll's book was being observed near the finale, or was that simply giving a clue to your next piece of writing Paul?.

You should all, from writer to director, performers to back stage, be delighted with the outcome and I trust your audiences will enjoy it as we did.

Thank you for the opportunity of seeing this most recent Ecclesall Theatre Company production,

Philip Smith

Noda North East District 6 Regional Rep