GHOSTS SPOTTED AT OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL!

Something's haunting Oak Park High School, and it's coming straight from the theater!

Author Shirley Jackson originally wrote the book, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, 1959, Its popularity quickly spread, adapting to a movie in 1963. A year later, F. Andrew Leslie transformed the book into a stage play. Future variations include a later movie in 1999, and the acclaimed Netflix series in 2018. In this story, a chilling study is being performed by an elderly scientist, Dr. Montague, bringing together a group of selected individuals in touch with the paranormal world. Eleanor, Luke Sanderson, and Theodora are the chosen subjects entering the mansion of the Hill House. The visitors must draw out the mysterious forces, while madness slowly takes over the house and their minds.

Paige Hall is the easily spooked Eleanor, creating and building an emotional arc for their character throughout the play. First showing a timid and quiet personality, but masterfully switching to a more unhinged and unstable woman as she spends more time in the house. Dr. Montague is portrayed by John Morrison in an eccentric, yet almost fatherly way. His use of tone and way of speaking convinces the audience of his age and knowledge.

The fickle fashionista, Theodora, is excellently depicted by Tristan Young. Her chemistry with Eleanor during the terror filled paranormal scenes, shows the audience her range from uptight to protective. Ava Broermann steals the scene each time she comes on as Mrs. Montague. Her strong-willed determination helped add comedic relief to every one of her scenes.

Hill House's grand and Victorian look is achieved by Mason Sloan and Lily Tice. Each area of the house is detailed to perfection, with every item adding something new. Costumes, done by Celeste Morgan, contrasts the Victorian manor with the play's modern-day setting, and expressed every character's individual traits. A costume standout is Theodora's character, consistently showing off her glamorous side. Jasper Rasmussen and Olin Spencer use lights to give a creepy atmosphere to the house, using red to represent the evil within. A particular moment where a lamp was turned off and on while the stage lights were synced with it is an impressive touch. Sound done by Solomon Hipsh, Zenan Johnson, and Laylah Smyth brings the spirits of the house to life! From ghostly laughter to the spine-chilling knocking on the doors, the sound design is flawlessly eerie.

During some moments of the play, it is difficult to understand the lines the actors were saying. However, it was only for a split second, and did not disrupt the flow of a scene. The changes between scenes feels moderately long, but fitting music played to keep the ambience and audience engaged. In a couple moments throughout the show, some pieces of the set weren't properly secured. Nonetheless, the actors and stage crew quickly fixed the mistakes.

Oak Park High School's HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE terrifies and mystifies the audience, not only showing the living's perspective, but the dead's too!

by Alessandra Rossi of Park Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

A HAUNTED HOME IS A HAPPY HOME

Science and ghost hunting go hand in hand. But, what happens when four people are asked to stay in a haunted house for some time? Oak Park High School takes the audience on a ghost hunting adventure in their rendition of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a book written in 1959 by Shirley Jackson and later adapted into a play in 1964 by F. Andrew Leslie. The play follows four guests who stay in the house to investigate its frightening reputation when strange and paranormal things start to occur. The lead investigator, Dr. Montague, is conducting research about the house to publish a book on the occurrences and he has requested the other three to accompany him. For their own separate reasons, they join him.

John Morrison, who plays Dr. Montague has such a wide stage presence. The balance between his physicality and subtle, yet consistent, character voice truly makes him feel as if he is his character's age. His dynamic with Jay Carter, who plays Luke Sanderson, is truly renowned. The two are consistently in sync and bouncing off of one another.

Tristan Young, who plays Theodora, embodies the character perfectly. With sass and glamor, Young has a stunning aura around her on stage constantly- one that matches the character's personality really well. Every character choice is thought out and she continues to stay in character even when the focus is not on her. Katherine Robbins, who plays Mrs. Dudley, also creates an incredible stage presence for herself, with her character voice, calculated movement, and facial expressions all working together beautifully.

The costuming, hair, and makeup fit perfectly for each character. It captures the essence and personality of all of them, especially Theodora, leaving the audience in awe every time she steps out onstage with a costume that fits her personality flawlessly. The makeup reveal on Eleanor, played by Paige Hall leaves the audience floored with realistic and horrifying special effects.

The technical aspects of this show are also very impressive. The set captures the Victorian era really well, and the props methodically compliment the set, nothing feeling out of place. The individual working lamps and lights are beautiful, and the smoke machine continues to leave the audience in suspense. While there are a few moments throughout the show where the pacing is off, it is saved by suspenseful sound effects, lighting, and so much more.

Oak Park High School's production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE leaves the audience spooked and craving more. It's a great rendition of the original horror tale, with small satirical details to level it out. An excellent performance all around.

by Crystal Baker of Winnetonka High School

--------------------------------------------------

HILL HOUSE IS HUGELY HAUNTED!!!

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL'S performance of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a haunting story indeed, creating a captivating show for all to see. There is not a moment where you aren't on the edge of your seat, due to the impeccable sets and props, chilling sound effects and lighting, and incredible acting from all members of the cast.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE was written by Shirley Jackson and first published in 1959. It has been adapted to film twice, as well as becoming a TV series, and was adapted into a play by F. Andrew Leslie in 1964. The play features seven characters based on 19th century "psychic researchers."

The moment the show begins, you see a Victorian style house, complete with the most intricate set pieces and props. From terrifying gargoyles to ornate wallpaper, this set is not one you want to forget. Along with the set, incredible technical aspects such as sound and lighting put this show over the top. The characters play off of terrifying shaking walls, whispering voices and more throughout the show. As a show with a small cast such as this, it can be hard to fill the stage, but these actors do a magnificent job of using their stage to the best of their ability.

As the show begins, you first meet the lead of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, Eleanor, played by Paige Hall. Throughout the show, the character falls prey to the house, and goes insane. Paige characterizes this masterfully, displaying much depth in her acting, particularly when she is further down the path of insanity and screaming. Another notable character is Dr. Montague, played by John Morrison. As the play progresses, Dr. Montague is seen developing emotional attachments to the guests of Hill House. John portrays the character wonderfully, serving as a father figure to the younger guests, specifically Eleanor.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE would be nothing without the glamorous Theodora, played by Tristan Young. Theodora quickly befriends Eleanor and attempts to encourage Eleanor to be brave, which Tristan displays impressively through her body language. Another memorable performance is that of Jay Carter, who performs as Luke Sanderson. Their witty and flirtatious lines are delivered flawlessly. When it comes to humor, two characters stand out in the subject, Mrs. Montague and Arthur, played by Ava Broermann and Ben Droptiny respectively. The comic duo creates a push and pull of frightening and hilarious.

The marvelous acting is added onto by the extraordinary technical aspects. The show opens with a spotlight on creepy dolls that are rigged to move around. From that moment on, there are numerous impressive characteristics, such as glowing red lights under the bed, along with sinister sound effects. The costumes perfectly match each character's personality and add to the progression of the show. While costume changes are necessary to show the passing of time, sometimes they take longer than reasonable, in which the audience sits in darkness. To combat this, eerie music is played throughout the costume changes. While the use of music enhances the production, there are occasional instances of mics being too loud or too soft. The props provide for a visually enticing show, in tandem with the professional set construction.

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL'S acting and technical aspects envelop you in the fearsome show that is THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE. It is apparent that all members of the cast and crew are determined to create a mind-blowing production. OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL has proven that Hill House is hugely haunted!

by Sabra Staggs of Park Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

A HAUNTINGLY GOOD NIGHT

Oak Park High School's production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, is a wonderful production not to be missed. An evening full of fun, mystery, and exciting characters, Oak Park puts on a great show. THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE was originally a novel by Shirley Jackson written in 1959 and adapted for the stage in 1964. This novel/show inspired many authors, including Stephen King, and inspired the Netflix series of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE in 2018.

We follow the story of Eleanor Vance (played by Paige Hall) as she shows up to Hill House. Mrs. Dudley (played by Katherine Robbins) leads her to the main room, where she waits for the other guests. Theodora (played by Tristan Young), shows up and the two begin talking. Eventually Dr. Montague (played by John Morrison) and Luke Sanderson (played by Jay Carter) enter the scene and reveal what brings them to the house. Eleanor is very intrigued and wants to know what is going on with the house, and Dr. Montague intends on finding out with the help of his guests. A thrilling tale full of paranormal activity and a few characters that come in later, Mrs. Montague (played by Ava Broermann) and Arthur Parker (played by Ben Droptiny) the entire cast does a lovely job of bringing Hill House to life.

Paige Hall gives a convincing performance of Eleanor, and brings an eerie feeling to the show. John Morrison does an amazing job of really becoming Dr. Montague. His characterization and the presence he brings to the stage is memorable. Jay Carter has great interactions with every character. Tristan Young gives an outstanding performance and demands all eyes on her. Her stage presence is enviable, and she truly embodies her character. Ava Broermann and Ben Droptiny work together wonderfully and give the show the comedic relief it needs. Katherine Robbins deserves an honorable mention for her character, Mrs. Dudley. Her facial expressions and body language were always perfect, eyes were drawn to her when she walked on stage.

The set, designed by Mason Sloan and Lily Tice, fit the show perfectly. It's slight, but noticeable touches made the show. The Victorian style is noticeable without feeling cluttered and was just so great overall. The lighting, managed by Jasper Rasmussen, was very fitting. Although it was minimal, the warm lighting and flashing LEDs during the paranormal parts were well done. Sound, managed by Zenan Johnson, had many surprising elements. The voiceovers and sinister laughs added just what we needed. The costumes, managed by Celeste Morgan, were inspired. There were so many costumes and quick changes, and yet every single costume perfectly embodied their characters. The hair and makeup, managed by Sophy Marks and Natalee Tate were also impressive, given the amount of time the characters' hair changed.

Oak Park does a remarkable job with this production; THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a show to be proud of. A night spent watching this production is a night spent well!

by Alyssa Hardee of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

POLTERGEISTS FROM THE PASTï¿½

A cold wind blows through the house; laughter is heard, but where is it coming from? Doors are rattling, the walls are shaking, and screams can be heard throughout the house. All of these spooky commodities are things to look forward to when seeing Oak Park High School's spine-chilling production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

On a dark and brooding night, an unsettling and bewildering study occurs; three people who seem to share a similar mystical ability to understand and communicate with spirits are invited to Hill House; a mid-Victorian mansion rumored to house a ghastly, devastating evil. Paranormal activities begin to rapidly pick up when a certain spirit begins to consume the psyche of a certain resident of Hill House, causing suspicion and doubt to ravage all other guests. Distinctive and eccentric characters can keep the audience enthralled and attached to the story during the increasingly intense events.

Every interaction between the characters is very precise and transitions between each conversation are smooth and seamless, which provides an amazing storytelling experience to an already spectacular show. The lighting and sets for this production are also outstanding. With lighting by Jasper Rasmussen and sets by Mason Sloan and Lily Tice, these individuals excel in making this production so eerie and disturbing.

Speaking of outstanding individuals, these cast members are able to capture the audience's attention in every scene. Everyone's character is very consistent and distinct, making each personality exceptional. Eleanor, played by Paige Hall, is a wonderful example of a powerful character, leading the show with her blood-curdling screams and strong line delivery. Hall's character choices and attention to detail envelop the audience in her performance. In addition, Tristan Young, as Theodora, captures the attention of every audience member with her comedic choices and her femme fatale energy as soon as she sets foot on the stage. John Morrison and Jay Carter as Dr. Montague and Luke Sanderson can play off each other and create a serious tone for the production, while also adding clever comical elements in their delivery.

Other phenomenal actors are Ava Broermann and Ben Droptiny as Mrs. Montague and Arthur Parker, who are a hilarious comical duo, giving the audience great laughs after an intense and scary moment.

At times, the articulation of some lines may make some deliveries difficult to understand, but overall, the projection and character development throughout the production makes each actor stand out in very impressive ways.

Oak Park's production of The Haunting of Hill House leaves the audience chilled, from the humble beginning to the petrifying ending, these actors keep the audience on their toes to the very end. The poltergeists from the past may not have been real, but the bone-chilling night the audience was given surely is something they won't forget.

by Ash McMillen of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

THE DAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE
A wall shakes; a door slams; a man laughs; a baby cries. Whether in search for a good thrill or a cure for a bad case of hiccups, Oak Park High School brings shock and suspense to their stage with THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

Inspiring the minds of horror visionaries like Stephen King and Neil Gaiman, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE originated as a 1959 novella written by Shirley Jackson. Five years later, F. Andrew Leslie adapted her work for the stage, bringing the spooky story to theatersï¿½ and screens with the 2018 Netflix adaptation. Oak Park High School is only the latest stop for this classic tale with lengthy lineage.

Within the walls of the foreboding Hill House can be found the leading paranormal team: Dr. Montague and his three hand-selected psychics who intend to reveal what unholy forces are at play in the "uninhabited" mansion. Unbeknownst to them, these spirits have sinister plans for the quartet's investigation, driving each mind to their own form of madness. The cast of seven enters from today's world into the depths of Hill House's vast halls of history. Who they are when they walk out, however, is starkly different.

What does remain stable amidst the terror of the location is the storytelling of Dr. Montague (John Morrison). Despite the long, expository nature of his monologues, Morrison is able to hold the audience's attention in his engaging gestures and delivery. Also captivating the attention, Theodora (Tristan Young) slays the auditorium with her elegance and subtlety. Young's judgmental, yet collected attitude juxtaposes incredibly well with the nerve exemplified by her counterparts, allowing her to react in a way that stands out from the rest of the cast, but stays authentic to Theo.

Despite Morrison and Young's individual prowess, the highlight of the performance lies on the small interactions between certain pairings of characters. Bromantic aggression between Luke (Jay Carter) and Arthur (Ben Droptiny) drives forth with every slap on the back that sounds like it hurt more than intended; and sisterly compassion radiates off of Theodora and Eleanor (Paige Hall), whether they're arguing over Luke's affection or holding each other for safety during one of the house's haunts. Although the cast's movements feel anticipated, lines are often delivered too quickly to be understood, and sometimes facial expressions tend to fall short of the gravity of the scenes, but these dynamic duos illustrate that the performers have intricate relationships with one another on stage.

A show of this breed would not be possible without the technical crews, especially the exceptional work done by publicity. The lobby feels as though it could be its own room hiding within the Hill House, and the design of promotional materials is impressive. The work of hair and makeup is also notable. Dr. Montague's bald cap and facial hair are so realistic, they are a scare on their own, and the blood on Eleanor's face during curtain call is delightfully and horrifically unexpected. There are many scenes within the show that have the narrative told through audio, and unfortunately, these instances tend to be unclear due to the sound design. At one point, an audio cue is interpreted as the sound of a neck breaking, which makes the eventual reappearance of the thought-to-have-had-their-neck-broken character very confusing.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a thrilling charm. Signature characters brought to life (and death) under circumstances that feel all too familiar in the horror genre seen straight from the inspiration material itself. The walls shake; the doors slam; the audience stands for an ovation.

by Caitlin Morrison of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

Don't Look Behind You? They Have Us Too Busy Looking Ahead!

Oak Park High School's THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a real banger. No seriously, the walls are shaking and it's getting louderï¿½ is that a baby crying?!

Most know the tale from the hit Netflix series, but for all the oldies out there, one name may come to mind: 1959. Oops, Shirley Jackson! Jackson is the acclaimed author responsible for The Haunting of Hill House, which is hailed by many today as one of the greatest horror stories ever. The version Oak Park High School possessed was adapted in 1964. Dr. Montague, yes, Dr. Montague! That's correct, and forget ghost stories, he knows it's time to prove ghost science! With the haunted history of Hill House in mind, he figures that one summer stay can't hurt: hence his insistence on not being alone. He enlists Eleanor Vance and Theodoraï¿½ just Theodora. What's the use in a last name, anyway? A snarky chap named Luke Sanderson also tags along, if you can stand him! That makes four, or five, rather, for there's another character: Hill House itself!

The ï¿½Scream Queen' of this fantastic production is none other than Paige Hall, who plays Eleanor Vance. Vance shrieks with fury, leading the cast in expressing the horror that they are witnessing on stage. This is supposed to be a high school production, but somehow John Morrison (Dr. Montague) is convincing us he is an old man! The tone of his voice and his academic grievances with his colleagues holds an iron grip on the audience. Morrison knows how to distinguish his character in every form, in the spotlight or not, and if he is a real old man, I don't want him off the stage!

Scumbaggery hasn't looked this slick in a while, but Jay Carter knows how to be awfully good! Their mannerisms show the toll Hill House is taking on them, and their arrogance acts as a perfect foil to the other characters, distinguishing themself as a whole. Tristan Young plays Theodora with much precision, and her attitude is felt through her top-notch body language. Her disaffected-ness to the terrifying nature of Hill House bounces right off Eleanor's reactive state. The show follows her on stage with every click of her heels.

With great kudos to Zenan Johnson and his crew, the practical usage of banging on stage balances impressively with the loudspeaker sounds of a baby crying, or something more sinister cackling. The sounds always came through startlingly clear, which is quite a feat in itself. The makeup design, created by Sophy Marks and Natalee Tate, made it to where suddenly a senior citizen doctor could be in a high school show! The balding of Dr. Montague's head and the shagginess of his beard is masterfully implemented, which made Morrison's character even more notable. Costumes head Celeste Morgan and her crew did a fine job at attempting to add variety to each of the character's outfitsï¿½ most notably with Theodora, as she wears a different dress as each day passes in the show.

While many curses inflict their spirits upon high school productions as a whole, some could have been avoided. The blackouts were really drawn out but recovered nicely with the addition of music. The actors could try in the future to fill in the silence with unique mannerisms when they're not in the spotlight.

Oak Park High School's THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE makes you want to watch your backï¿½ but how can we, if our attention is glued to the stage?!

by Conner Sisemore of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

OAK PARK'S IN HOUSE POLTERGEIST

Where does insanity come from? What could suddenly break man's most powerful tool--the mind? In THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE the answer is simple, ghosts. However, it is no easy task to recreate a severe mental condition when it is derived from a fictitious creature, but Oak Park approaches this problem head on in their performance of the seminal 1964 play.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE was first published by Andrew F. Leslie. This play follows 3 young people with connections to the haunted mansion that is Hill House and a doctor with a vested interest in the investigation of supernatural phenomenon as they attempt to complete a weeklong exploratory stay in the house. Whilst they remain in the home slowly the intrepid researchers are victim to numerous supernatural incidents, brought forth by the spirits remaining in the residence. These incidents have the characters lose their sense of reality slowly driving them to insanity. Thus, in watching this show the audience bears witness to this complex spiral of the conscience and conscious.

The most difficult problem in presenting said story is the grand emotions wherein the stability of the characters is grievously assaulted. For example, the main character, Eleanor, must embody an individual who is more terrified than she's ever been--screaming and crying profusely on multiple occasions, and Paige Hall is able to embody these moments expertly. Contrary to Eleanor's emotional peaks there is Doctor Montague. In response to this challenge John Morrison, Doctor Montague's actor, brings a masterful sense of maturity. As if taunting its performers, the script calls for Theodora's performer to muster a similar calm to the Doctor and emotional peaks that rival Eleanor's, however, this problem is addressed by Tristan Young, a woman who diligently approaches these difficulties by creating a character who approaches life with an astounding vigor and an intense emotional maturity. Beyond simply embodying individuals the cast of Oak Park's rendition of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE there are numerous instances of them creating an ethos of sorts between their characters. For example, John Morrison clearly invested quite a lot of time into going beyond the simple challenge of playing a father-like character to form a unique connection with every other performer. With the emotional peaks of Paige Hall and the potent stability of Tristan Young and John Morrison this show successfully recreates the potent emotional core the script and its preceding novel require.

Given the intense nature of the scenes of this show the sound design is another problematic area of production. In particular, since the dialogue is integral to the path of insanity the show follows the sound crew is required to vigilantly apply themselves to monitoring and correcting the audio as needed. Once again, Oak Park meets this challenge through the splendid work of their sound crew: Solomon Hipsh and Laylah Smyth and their sound crew head and master electrician, Zenan Johnson and Olin Spencer, respectively.

All in all, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is incredibly difficult to perform, but through the diligent work of their performers and technical crews Oak Park's performance experiences great successes in their rendition. Their sound crew provides excellent clarity and space for their actors and in turn the actors develop a powerful emotional rollercoaster using their resources. Thus, if one is in the mood for a scary night or an intriguing exploration of the human mind it would be by no means a mistake to view Oak Park's rendition of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

by Josh Myers of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE put on by Oak Park High School is a psychological horror that keeps the audience in suspense until the very last second. The play takes place in an old victorian house in which many people have died. A certain Dr. Montague brings a party of people to investigate the supernatural happenings in the house. Will Dr. Montague find what he's looking for or will the spirits have their way with the new guests?

It's easy to see the hard work put into these characters by each of the actors. John Morrison, who plays Dr. Montague has great inflection in his lines which really adds to his inquisitive character. Paige Hall performs Eleanor Vance in such a whimsical way. In the moments that Eleanor is being tormented by the ghosts, Paige does a great job of physicalizing and emoting her character's experience. Tristan Young gives amazing characterization to the bold Theodora. For example, she adds spice into Theodora's movement about the stage which really livens up her scenes. The duo of Mrs. Montague, played by Ava Broermann, and Arthur Parker, played by Ben Droptiny, have amazing chemistry and comedic timing in their scenes.

A very interesting aspect of the show is the costume changes between each scene. Costume manager Celeste Morgan uses costumes to convey the times in which the scenes take place very well, and is very clever with adding personality to the characters because the audience gets a sampling of their wardrobe instead of just one look. Theodora's costumes are a highlight because each outfit matched the mood and her emotions of the scene.

The play uses eerie technical effects to bring up the energy and intensity. The lights by Jasper Rasmussen are fitting for each scene, and in the scary moments, they help to draw suspense and heighten the scenes. The sound effects by Zenan Johnson are very well balanced with the actors' mics and even in the loud climaxes, the audience can hear everything happening on the stage. The special effects such as the wall banging and fog make the scenes very jumpy and visually intriguing.

The set by Mason Sloan and Lily Tice is very intricate and detailed. Something that added to the character of the house is the way the rooms are separated yet cohesive. It does a good job of directing the audience's focus. The set crew is very on point with their cues and has great timing with what is happening on stage at all times. Along with that, the house moving on its own is a very nice touch and is done like a magic trick so the audience never sees how it's performed.

The hair and makeup by Sophy Marks and Natalee Tate does a wonderful job of giving each character unique hair and makeup. Dr. Montague's bald cap, wig, and beard are very detailed and realistic. Eleanor's hair changes go well with her character development, and the special effects makeup is also done very wonderfully.

All of the technical elements help set the mood and bring the house and characters to life, and in combination with the actors, the story is so detailed and intricate. The sinister and supernatural energy is really brought out with the the use of all of the elements added together.

by Kaitlyn Waggoner of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES HILL HOUSE HOME HOME HOME

Have you ever wondered if the campfire ghost stories you heard as a kid had some truth to them? Or maybe you have thought about how those visitants in Ghostbusters always seemed a little too real. If so, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE satisfies the craving for real-life paranormal activity. Oak Park High School leaves the audience with the chilling wonder of if they brought a spirit home with them after seeing this frightening production.

Adapted from the novel written by Shirley Jackson in 1959, F. Andrew Leslie brings THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE to life, or death, in this case. This psychological thriller tells the story of four people, Eleanor, Theodora, Luke, and Dr. Montague, who are on the hunt to prove the existence of supernatural happenings, and what better place to do so than in the haunted mansion of Hill House? Within the first few days, they witness the presence of apparitions: from the banging echoes down the hallway to chilling messages smeared on the walls and addressed to the most vulnerable member of the group, Eleanor. As more time passes, these supernatural events get more and more dangerous and eerie, ultimately leading to Eleanor being driven completely mad. Oak Park High School pulls the audience into their ghost-hunting adventures, with the desire to detect these spirits before they make this curious group undetectable themselves!

John Morrison takes on the role of Dr. Montague with extraordinary believability. His use of expansive body language, and expressive vocal inflection, diction, and projection brings this wise anthropologist to life. He uses characterization to develop a relationship between each of the characters and strings the story along with his informative and engaging monologues.

Tristan Young, who portrays Theodora, commands the stage with her spunky personality, eye-catching fashion, and engaging characterization. Her use of fiery body language, expressive vocal diction, and entertaining stage business is performed with practiced ease. Her talent for playing off of her fellow characters makes for a more entertaining performance. Jay Carter depicts Luke Sanderson exceptionally well. Their use of intentionally arrogant body language, cocky vocal delivery, and snarky attitude leaves the audience disliking Luke for being so shallow and air-headed. Tristan and Jay have some of the best chemistry in the show and help to keep the audience entertained.

The tech crews are some of the most important aspects of this production, especially considering its supernatural feature. Stage manager, Andy Mast, works remarkably well with Halle Byers, Elleanna Miera, and Katie Slattery on stage crew, Lux McBeth and crew on props, and sound to help the ghostly effects of the show run smoothly and efficiently. Sophy Marks, Gemma Murray, and Natalee Tate on hair and makeup bring a realistic aspect to each of the characters, with the hair telling a story in itself. The more bizarre events occur, the more stressed and worn out the characters visibly become. Altogether, these technical aspects help to provide a satisfactory sense of imagery.

The audience will be left wondering whose hand they were holding after watching this thrilling production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE. Viewers will be haunted by the memory of dancing dolls, smokey, Victorian rooms, and the exemplary character performances from Oak Park High School.

by Leilani Jones of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

THE HAUNTING OF OAK PARK

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL did a wonderful performance of HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE. The play THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE was adapted by F. Andrew Leslie from the 1959 novel by Shirley Jackson. The play follows Dr. Montague as he brings 2 physically inclined individuals, Eleanor (Paige Hall) and Theodora (Tristan Young), into a rumored haunted house that Luke Sanderson (Jay Carter), is the heir to Dr. Montague, is working to see if the house is truly haunted. OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL took great efforts to minorly adapt the script to modern day with elements showing up in costumes.

Jay Carter played the character Luke expertly. Their inflection and stage presence was eye catching to say the least. I enjoyed their dynamic with Theodora, played by Tristan Young, was vaguely flirtatious and had much needed comedic relief. John Morrison was wonderful as Dr. Montague with intriguing character work and amazingly applied prosthetics. The prosthetics in this show blew me away! As someone who loves practical effects I enjoyed the final bows as Paige Hall took her bow as Eleanor with expertly applied prosthetics showing her gruesome injuries. Sophy Marks did an exceptional job portraying characters with their makeup. The elaborate quick changes orchestrated by Celeste Morgan were slightly drawn out but the costumes, with some slight pinning issues, were excellent.

The Victorian inspired set, designed by Mason Sloan and Lily Tice, was well decorated and the spectacular props team, led by Lux McBeth, complemented the set in a very enjoyable way. The lighting team's use of LED's really brought out the ghostly horror of the show. Though the cast slightly struggled to gauge when the blackouts were. The sound team did a great job of choosing music and sound effects that eerily illustrated the show. The banging effects definitely startled me at points and was creepily drew all attention to the terrifying atmosphere.

Overall, seeing HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE at OAK PARK high school was an enjoyable experience. All of the seven-person cast truly showed their hard work. Even the comedic relief characters Mrs. Montague (Ava Broermann) and Arthur Parker (Ben Droptiny) made wonderful additions to the show. I hope to see even more wonderful performances at OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL.

by Mary Reck of Belton High School

--------------------------------------------------

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL THRILLS YOU WITH THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL performs a wonderful show of a terrifying house and the guests held in it. This piece ensures an audience with the frights of a horror-outlined plot and tells an entrancing story within it.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is based on the 1959 gothic horror novel that was written by the author, Shirley Jackson. This story follows a small group of people who are believed to be psychically receptive as they stay together in the Hill House. This house's terrifying history and stories are brought forward into real experiences for the guests where evil takes a role in their lives. The story of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE has been brought to many platforms from a novel to plays and tv series.

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL'S cast carries this show in a way that is more than just telling a story. Each of the main four characters has a very specific and unique personality that shines on stage and draws the attention of all audience members. John Morrison who portrays Dr. Montague displays the art of an amazing storyteller. His voice can be heard as chilling and calming all at the same time. Morrison executes excellent body language and expressions as he plays his part and never seems to lose touch with his own character.

Paige Hall, as Eleanor, and Tristan Young, who plays Theodora, brings the excitement of this story alive. The way Hall and Young perform together is something very amusing. These two characters held their parts strong and displayed a beautiful relationship between their characters as well as an emotional roller coaster. Young always seems to be able to get a quick laugh from the viewers while Hall could present a strong, intense response to the plot.

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL creates a superb set design of the house. So many details were put into this creation and every single one is there for the perfect show. The lamps used in the house are the ultimate mood-setter for the scenes, creating a soft, but disturbing atmosphere. Behind the house, we can appreciate the work of the backstage crew and how they could make the house feel and look alive. Everything was timed to the tee and brought goosebumps to the audience.

The many costumes put together stood out just right. Each look carried the personality of their character. From Eleanor's 1950s nightgown look to her humble sweaters and Theodora's very fascinating high-fashion outfits, everything made up for a moment of stillness as the actors change into their next. Although not everything was as perfect as their outfits, such as the sound and the actors' ability to enunciate and speak every line clearly, the show deserves a round of applause.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE at OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL'S theatre takes you on a thrill ride of your own as you follow the storyline. This show deserves a full house, it is a wonderful time to end your night.

by Cassidy Gangle of Park Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

One Spirited Stage

During the day the forbidden Victorian Hill House remained empty and quiet except for when the grumpy old housekeeper struts the halls and "clears" the kitchen. The silence is broken once Dr. Montague and his unacquainted peers Eleanor Vance, Theodora, Luke Sanderson, Mrs. Montague, and Arthur Parker join him in his investigation involving a supernatural phenomenon. As the day turns to night ominous spirits find their perfect moment to strike.

THE HAUNTING of HILL HOUSE is a dramatic horror mystery adapted by F. Andrew Leslie, from the book by Shirley Jackson in 1959. The story takes place in a more modern time while on the other hand, the Hill House style is set in the 1950s. This story was formed into many different versions such as the original book by Shirley Jackson written in 1959, and A couple of movies including "The Haunting" and "House on Haunted Hill". Netflix, a few years later, released the show "The Haunting of Hill House" in 2018. The Haunting of Hill House is a one-of-a-kind production that leaves audience members on the edge of their seats.

Oak Park High School masters the accuracy and dramatic side of THE HAUNTING of HILL HOUSE. From horror screams, glowing red lights, body language, costumes that matched characters well, makeup, and hair to the beautiful set, Oak Park has it all.

The Doctor of Philosophy Dr. Montague played by John Morrison carried his deep middle age accent throughout the show very nicely. Throughout the show John Morrison connects with his fellow cast, acting as a fatherly figure by using his body language and emotion. The nervous protagonist Eleanor Vance played by Paige Hall sweeps the stage with her dramatic outburst of screams. Throughout the show, Paige Hall shows how her character is slowly losing her mind through body language, responses, and the emotion in her voice. Paige Hall brings her character to life. The dynamic duo of Mrs. Montague played by Ava Broermann and Arthur Parker played by Ben Droptiny, strikes the stage while catching the attention of many audience members. From aimlessly pointing a handgun everywhere to entering intense scenes fashionably late, the two never let their character's energy down.

Set designers, Mason Sloan and Lily Tice, did an amazing job designing the set. The house felt very Victorian and old. The placing of the eerie paintings to the little skull design on the hallway wallpaper set a mysterious mood for the house. Lighting manager, Jasper Rasmussen, and sound managers, Zenan Johnson, Solomon Hipsh, and Laylah Smyth, set the mood for a darkened house with rarely any windows with dimmed table and desk lights. While pounding on the door sound crew made sure to contrast the louder door and painting rattles when the situation gets out of hand. Making suspense throughout the show the lighting crew did a really good job of controlling all the different lights flashing throughout different rooms and scenes.

While the spirit may still be haunting, this show is sensational! Oak Park's production of THE HAUNTING of HILL HOUSE shines throughout the cast, stage crew, set designers, and lights and sound crew. Although the Hill House has a reputation for "insistent hospitality", Oak Park High School's performance of THE HAUNTING of HILL HOUSE sends shivers down everyone's spine with their remarkable show!

by Clara Brackett of Park Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

THE BEAUTIFUL NIGHTMARE OF THE HAUNTING HILL HOUSE

Is there anyone brave enough to face the fear of an abandoned, haunted house? Even with decisions dictating whether or not someone lives or someone dies, why not face a few extra nights? Oak Park High School dauntingly displays their production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

A horror-filled play with eerie twists and turns, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE takes place in an abandoned house of a late father and his two daughters.  After the assumed murder and suicide of the daughters, the house was left abandoned except for the housekeeper, Mrs. Dudley, and a few visits from curious guests.  With reports of paranormal activity, investigator Dr. Montague is determined to test theories about the house and learn more about its history along with others he invited to work with him.  These people include Eleanor, Theodora, and Luke.

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL's setting of THE HAUNT OF HILL HOUSE is during modern-day times within an old Victorian style house.  The creepy paintings, dolls, and statues contribute to the old timely feeling of the house, making the rooms unsettling to be in.  Another aspect that stands out is the fog machine that is used after the first night's disaster.

Dr. Montague, played by John Morrison, is a responsible and intelligent character, who is making scientific research on Hill House.  Morrison displays great physical behavior and uses up the stage to his full advantage.  Paige Hall, playing Eleanor, exhibits a quiet, but well-spoken woman. Throughout the show, Hall does an excellent job of showing Eleanor's descent into madness.

Luke, played by Jay Carter, and Theodora, Tristan Young, are an important part of the show as they try their best to protect and keep Montague and especially Eleanor sane. There are times when the actors lacked physical and facial expressions, and their backs are often facing the audience.  Despite that, the cast kept the atmosphere mysterious throughout the show.

There is an eerie atmosphere created throughout the show that stays consistent due to the lighting of the stage done by Jasper Rasmussen.  Another addition is the sound done by Zenan Johnson.  The whispers and creaks of the abandoned house form a ghostly presence that enhances the chilling mood.  Makeup done by Sophy Marks and Natalee Tate is an impressive display of each character.  One particular makeup design that is the most notable is the blood and glass on Eleanor's face at end of the play.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE by OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL does a successful job of turning the night into a creepy, edge-of-your-seat show.  With the hard work of the cast and crew, the stage is transformed into a never-ending want for more.

by Urielle Gabriel of Park Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

A TERROR FILLED NIGHT AT OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Scare, startle, shock; what is there not to love? The combination of personalities and special effects led to a scream-filled audience that fueled an intense and dramatic stage at Oak Park High School's production of "THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE."

Written by novelist Shirley Jackson, "THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE" is a novel about a tiny group of spiritually susceptible individuals gathered at Hill House, a foreboding, Victorian home rumored to be evil. This unsettling and perplexing story concludes with the death of the main character Eleanor. This book was later adapted into a play that goes by the same title.

The audience witnesses a gruesome and powerful presentation in Oak Park High School's rendition of "THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE." It is easy and not overly difficult to understand. The actors excel in conveying the emotions of the drama through their faces and performance. During the whole play, the performers represent the events with reasonable accuracy. Instead of merely repeating words from memory, they really act. You can tell that they are making an effort to embody their roles.

Eleanor is made to appear terrified and grieving by Paige Hall. Her use of bodily emotion significantly adds to the play's melancholy. The audience is gripped in silent horror by her gut-wrenching screams throughout the play. John Morrison (Dr. Montague) does an excellent job of portraying a noble and inquisitive doctor. His performance is faultless, and it properly piques the viewer's curiosity. His relationship with the other actors adds to the realism of the horror. Tristan Young portrays Theodora, who is a very devoted person. Tristan gives a strong performance thanks to her physicality. Through her facial expressions and verbal intonation, she does an excellent job of communicating to the listener how she is feeling.

Ava Broermann and Ben Droptiny's portrayals of Mrs. Montague and Arthur, respectively, provide comedic relief and improve the mood of the play. The show's climax is aided by their humor.  As Mrs. Montague and Arthur rush downstairs brandishing a dress, a pistol, and a candlestick while dressed ridiculously in pajamas, it provides a welcome relief from the dramatic show. Mrs. Dudley is portrayed by Katherine Robbins as strict and serious. Every character has entertaining but serious interactions with her.

You are transported to the dark and unsettling Victorian home by the painstakingly planned lights. Jasper Rasmussen and Olin Spencer are excellent as a light crew. They create a totally separate realm on stage. Their work is excellent and does a fantastic job of conveying the plot. The Oak Park High School props team, made up of Lux McBeth and crew, has outfitted the set to a high standard. Laylah Smyth, Zenan Johnson, and Solomon Hipsh all do a fantastic job with the sound.

The Oak Park High School production of "THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE" is the height of fear. The crews and actors create a powerful atmosphere rife with passion and despair that feeds the show's progression and gruesome conclusion.

by Xavier Schneider of Park Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

AN AMAZING SHOW TO POSSESS

In human history, the belief of the supernatural was always a concept to marvel the minds of many. And there is no place like the world of theatre that captivates this idea best. OAK PARK THEATRE takes people through this very concept of spirits and ghosts; and skillfully pushes it right in the limelight, using the famous play THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

The idea for THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a typical thriller concept about conjuration, spiritual possession, and manipulation from the afterlife. Originally written by Shirley Jackson, and adapted by F. Andrew Leslie, the audience follows a story of characters that temporarily live inside a haunted house. Everything seems fine at first, but slowly things start taking turns and twists. OAK PARK THEATRE'S selection of this very show is what proves the fine excellence within many aspects of their performance.

Holding the limelight, John Morrison (featured as Dr. Montague) and Paige Hall (featured as Eleanor Vance) swipe the audience off their feet with their totally unique perspective on their characters. Every ounce of movement between the two shows purpose, effectiveness, and diligence. From hearing the strong and beautiful monologues from John, to hearing the amazingly portrayed actions and screams from Paige; they both hold firmly to playing efficient lead roles.

It took more than just the leads to keep this show running smoothly, that's where the strong supporting roles come in. The supporting actors and actresses in THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE such as Jay Carter (featured as Luke Sanderson) and Tristian Young (featured as Theodora). Witnessing the smooth stature and the jockish attitude from Jay, it gives an amazing effect on the show and its plot. Along with the sarcastic energy and the empowering attitude that Tristian presents. Both Tristian and Jay extravagantly hold up amazingly strong roles to support the show.

There is just so much happening backstage and behind a booth, that is what made the show magnificent. Lighting Crew (under the leadership of Jasper Rasmussen) and master electrician work (under the control of Olin Spencer) expands a level of excellence that is almost hard to believe. From elegant use of fading lights to match the dimness of scenes, to focusing on specific parts of the stage; lighting has accomplished what almost feels like professional lighting. Sound Crew (under the leadership of Zenan Johnson) stayed absolutely clear through the whole, while also giving awesome and spooky music for the intermissions.

Without a second thought, OAK PARK THEATRE has risen up this show to a level of excellence that is impressive and definitely worth a ticket. Every person involved with the making of the show put their hearts into it, and it shows. Ironically, for OAK PARK THEATRE performing a show about ghosts, they do make an audience so alive. For the perfection of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE that they captivate, their show deserves respect and appreciation.

by Douglas Crawford of Pleasant Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

WE'RE HERE FOR SCIENCE

Hill House is often called an evil place. Tucked away within the hills far away from anyone, this Victorian house is a place of much turmoil and mystery. Oak Park High School captured the mystery and horror of this evil place in their rendition of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE. There is much to say about this show, mainly because it was of excellent quality, a credit due to the actors and the tech crews behind this show.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE started its life as a novel written by Shirley Jackson in 1959. The version used by Oak Park High School is a stage adaptation done by F. Andrew Leslie in 1964. The story follows the investigations of a group of individuals with psychic abilities, led by an older researcher, Dr. Montague. The people aiding him are Eleanor, a girl with past experience with ghosts, Theodora, a girl who can sense what's about to happen, and Luke Sanderson, the heir to the house. Over the play, we see the house begin to possess Eleanor, and we follow her descent into madness.

One of the most memorable aspects of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is Dr. Montague. Dr. Montague is played by John Morrison. John did an amazing job in conveying the subtext of his role. At many different points throughout the show, he can be seen showing us the thoughts of his character with small movements. For example, there is a scene where his arrogant wife, Mrs. Montague, played by Ava Broermann, is mucking up his investigation by trying to influence his findings with superstition. You can see the exasperation in his character whenever he slumps over in a chair. His change in tone in reaction to the situation is amazing too. Eleanor is played by Paige Hall. She does a great job at showing the emotions of her character. It's tricky to play someone being possessed by an evil house, but she does it well. She's able to control her volume to match how far gone she is in her head, and just does a stellar job in her role.

One point of note on the tech side is lighting. Jasper Rasmussen and his crew did a great job at setting the mood in the house. The lights were set to a warm amber color, and it really looked like they stole the lights straight from an old Victorian house. The hair and makeup department led by Sophy Marks and Natalee Tate also did a great job. Dr. Montagues bald cap and beard looks completely natural. They also did an amazing job on Eleanor's ending makeup too.

Oak Park High School did an amazing job at portraying THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE. From the great acting, to the amazing support from the tech crews, this was a very memorable show. This was of a great quality for high school theater, and is definitely the watch.

by Jacob Petrowsky of Pleasant Hill High School

--------------------------------------------------

NOISES IN THE DARK

The horrors of Massachusetts awaken in one lonely house, Hill House. It is hard to imagine what unfathomable and strange things might have taken place here, but not for the Hill family. The house arose before, and is silently waiting for its next victims. This haunted house came to life on the stage at Oak Park High School's recent production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

The play chronicled the scientific research of 4 people who came from different places and came with the same goal: to find out what is going on in this haunted house. With their previous mental capabilities and paranormal experiences, they will come together to find out what is really lurking in the silent house.

Eleanor Vance (Paige Hall) is a sweet, quiet girl who has recently studied the Poltergeist, and is innocent to the experiences she will face when stepping one foot into this house. Hall's performance contained the power and raw emotion that one might go through in this scary situation. The scientist who brought them there, Dr. Montague (John Morrison), does a great job at being a leader and dealing with everything his own way. Whether helping one through an odd experience or giving reassurance to all, Morrison's stage presence is strong and powerful.

Eleanor's new friend, Theodora (Tristan Young) is a girl that is just the opposite of herself and brings a new perspective of relief after experiencing this house of horrors. The psychic abilities that she brings to help are a good asset to have on the team. Her connection and friendship with Eleanor were executed very well with real emotions involved in her performance, as well as being the calming friend. The other person that is invited to stay at Hill House is Luke Sanderson (Jay Carter). Their performance is pulled off well with many jokes and serious moments as well.

The set was extravagant and really encompassed what a Victorian house might have been like many years ago. From the paintings, to the old wallpaper, to the haunted porcelain dolls in the sleeping quarters, everything looks like something that has sat waiting for many a year. The props (accumulated by Lux McBeth and crew) were extremely accurate to the time period and also accurate to the eerie theme of the story line. The journal that was written by Mr. Craine looked and felt real to the senses. The costumes were truthful to modern day fashion worn by all generations and provided the perfect accompaniment to the story being shown on stage.

For a spooky performance with a great deal of creativity and spooky imagination, Oak Park High School deserves many rounds of applause for proving a night of intense excitement after performing THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

by Abbie Cook of Summit Christian Academy

--------------------------------------------------

MORE THAN A VACATION AT OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Have you ever watched a horror movie and imagined what it would be like to be there? Well, it was brought to life in THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE at Oak Park High School. This cast and crew went above and beyond to make sure every audience member felt immersed in the story and as if they were solving the mystery right alongside Dr. Montague. This play shows off different characters and many technical aspects on stage, yet they balanced them all wonderfully and performed a wonderful show.

Dr. Montague played by John Morrison has such a constant stage presence. His performance on stage reflected great characterization skills because there was never a moment he wasn't fully in character and reacting while not speaking. Continuing on with Eleanor played by Paige Hall had great voice inflection and was keeping her character growing during all three acts. With both of these great performers on stage, the show was already set up to succeed.

Moving forward to more lovely house guests, Luke Sanderson played by Jay Carter. The way they held themselves and their characterization was so wonderfully developed that it almost seemed natural. Next up there is Theodora played by Tristan Young, she worked so wonderfully with the rest of the cast, and was the drama and sass in the serious moments. She was a perfect choice for being the sassy character off-setting Eleanor. Her little reactions here and there were so fun to watch and added so much drama and comedy to the stage.

Mrs. Montague played by Ava Broermann, seen only in two of the three acts, added so many comedic actions to the stage and kept her character voice constant while being surrounded by other accents and voices. Arthur Parker, played by Ben Droptiny, quite often stole the scene with comedic reaction or funny delivery of lines.

Even though the set in this show didn't move it blew audience members away! The way it was designed and the way actors moved around it was spectacular, it felt so haunted and almost like another character. Alongside the set the costuming was so appropriate and personalized to every individual character and wonderful appearance on stage. Alongside many other technical aspects was tech, the lighting in the living room was so off putting it was perfect for the feel of the show, however the warm lighting in the bedroom didn't fit quite right. One of the technical aspects that could have been worked on were the levels and balance of mics, yet with small casts it's understandable to have that struggle.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE at Oak Park High School was wonderful and blew all expectations out of the water. Great job to the lovely cast and crew. This production really reflected all your hard work.

by Nora Schuh  of Summit Christian Academy

--------------------------------------------------

A NIGHT OF SUSPENSE, HORROR, AND PLANCHETTE?

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE was originally a novel written by Shirley Jackson in 1959. It was adapted for stage in 1964 by F. Andrew Leslie and in 2015, Anthony Neilson adapted a new stage adaptation for Sonia Friedman and Hammer for production at the Liverpool Playhouse.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE follows quite an unsuspecting couple of folks around.  Eleanor Vance, Theodora, Luke Sanderson, and the man who invited them all, Dr. Montague. They have come to Hill House "for scientific purposes”, says Dr. Montague as they try to uncover the secrets of Hill House. Things start to turn a little strange when doors start closing themselves, and Eleanor and Theodora hear some bumps in the night!

Oak Park High School took on the production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE and enhanced the show with a lot of character buildup and suspense. First, the audience is introduced to Eleanor Vance (Paige Hall) and Mrs. Dudley (Katherine Robbins). Robbins has an amazing take on the role, using facial expression, character voice, to have a phenomenal stage presence, demanding attention. Now the attention is demanded by Dr. Montague, (John Morrison) who establishes his character and uses facial expression and physicality to personify the role and really shine bright with both great line delivery and comedic timing.

Now we meet Theodora (Tristan Young), she brings to the show a sassy energy that none of the other characters can match. She not only has great physicality, but develops a clear chemistry on stage with Paige Hall, seeming to genuinely want to keep her safe. Another mention to give would be to Luke Sanderson (Jay Carter) who has great character development throughout the whole show. Using snarky remarks at the beginning to bring about some comedic relief and an egocentric physicality to really highlight the character. Jay and Tristan have an amazing back and forth play through the whole first act when they do interact, albeit not common.

The lights and sound for this show are perfect for the atmosphere, Andy Mast, Jasper Rasmussen, Halle Byers, Olin Spencer, and Zenan Johnson worked impeccably well together, and made the whole show better with their work. Another great thing to point out would be the LED lights coming from the tower door, Olin Spencer and Jasper really established a terrifying presence of the tower. And although there were some technical difficulties involving set pieces. The energy stayed the same and was carried well though the whole show.

The show was suspenseful, scary, and everything you'd expect in a classing horror show.

by Dylan Pearce of Winnetonka High School

--------------------------------------------------

MONSTER HOUSE

The human mind is tricky, it can make you see and feel things that simply aren't there. But the four temporary residents of a haunted house quickly realize that it isn't their minds deception causing unusual and horrifying events, but a force to be reckoned with. Oak Park High School's rendition of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is sure to make audience members grip their seats in suspense as the four members slowly lose their mind trying to find answers on the house.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE started as a novel written in 1959 by Shirley Jackson, later to be adapted into a play in 1964 by F. Andrew Leslie. The play takes place in Massachusetts and follows four oddly dynamic guests as they conduct scientific research about the house. As they stay in the house, they notice odd and quite paranormal details that could send chills down anyone's spine. The one who arranged it is none other than Dr. Montague, the lead investigator and paranormal enthusiast. In their own right, the other guests decide to assist Dr. Montague so that he can note his experiences and later write his own novel about them.

Oak Park's very own John Morrison acts as Dr. Montague and portrays the quirky, but stoic researcher in a way that lights up the stage and engages audience members. Paige Hall who plays Eleanor Vance is almost opposite in the sense that she is more reserved and conservative with her character. This dynamic works effortlessly as the story progresses and both characters develop. Morrison and Vance counter each other with ease and use powerful body language to distinguish their characters.

In addition, Theodora, a beautiful and mysterious guest of the house, provides a spicy kick to the show. Tristan Young who plays Theodora in THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE immerses herself into this role and makes it incredibly hard to keep eyes off of her throughout the show. With dazzling characterization and stage presence, she is sure to keep the audience wanting more. Jay Carter as Luke Sanderson is exactly what you expect from a show that relies on character dynamics, especially noting moments of characterization where they play Luke Sanderson as a more arrogant and flirtatious man. Young and Sanderson sparsely interact, but when they do, you can expect fireworks.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE utilizes tech in a simple, yet powerful way. Through flickering lights, moving dolls, and the use of a fog machine in moments where spirits were interacting with the guests of the house it is clear that they put forth effort towards creating an immersive and interesting production. In addition to that, the set and costumes enhance the show by adding a layer of detail that would otherwise be lost.

Oak Park High School's production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE surprises audience members with a plot twist finale that leaves viewers grasping for answers as to what future lies ahead for the Hill House and its temporary residents.

by Josie Hougham of Winnetonka High School

--------------------------------------------------

A HAUNTINGLY BEAUTIFUL TALE

Scary stories come to life with floating dolls, self-shutting doors, and the cries of ghosts filling the auditorium with a chilling atmosphere. The horror known as THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE arrives at Oak Park High School with the sole intention to frighten the audience with every single noise.

The famous story A HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, written by Shirley Jackson was adapted into a stage play in 1964 by F. Andrew Leslie. The show closely follows the novel as Dr. Montague invites Eleanor Vance and Theodora who are both known to have ghost experiences to the old haunted Victorian house. They're soon joined by a third participant named Luke Sanderson and together the four of them investigate what's happening behind the paranormal activities that transpire throughout the night.

Paige Hall who plays Eleanor Vance shows a frightening commitment to her character, going so far as violently thrashing around, screeching, and collapsing to the ground just while trying to act possessed. She also shows a deep understanding of her character as she slowly goes insane and changes her tone completely by the end of the show becoming more berserk and deranged. Tristan Young, who plays the strong-headed Theodora, is sure to immediately grab the audience's attention throughout the entirety of the play. Whether it be her eye-catching costumes, facial expressions or aloof body posture, she is always the center of attention in the most perfect way possible.

Now with the man who started it all Dr. Montague, played by John Morrison, who fully understands his character. Keeping an old man like posture and tone, Morrison ensures every move has a direct motivation behind it to make his character more complex. Jay Carter, who plays Luke Sanderson, is definitely a comedic relief throughout the show with a bubbly personality that flows well with the rest of the cast. Not only being able to bounce back and forth with their lines, but also presenting a more relaxed physicality. They truly are a joy to watch throughout the show.

The house comes to life in the show, especially in Eleanor's room. The room is slightly elevated above the parlor and although they have the same aesthetic, they feel completely separate.  As her room has shaking walls, scratching on doors and even smoke coming from under the floor. Another beautiful aspect of the show is the costuming. As each scene is a different day and they portray this perfectly with a new costume each scene, Theodora's costumes especially stand out as being a lot bolder than the rest.

Overall, the show was filled with beautiful technical elements to immerse the audience immediately, paired with the favorable acting. Oak Park High School elevates the fear the original novel had and puts on a hauntingly beautiful tale of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

by Kristina King of Winnetonka High School

--------------------------------------------------

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE: A STORY OF TRUE FEAR

Many say that the mind plays tricks, that every imaginary sound is just fear. But can flickering lights, toy dolls moving, doors closing on their own, and children crying be just the mind's imagination? Oak Park High School explores this concept in their production of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE.

Originally inspired by Shirley Jackson's 1959 novel, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE was adapted for the stage in 1964 by F. Andrew Leslie. The dark story has also been adapted into three variations of film between 1963 and 2018. The Hill House, believed to be haunted and known for being sinister and eerie, rarely sees any visitors as it is only occupied by the elderly caretaker, Mrs. Dudley. However, this trend is soon broken when supernatural phenomenon investigator, Dr. Montague finds himself and three others staying in Hill House to research these strange occurrences.

Throughout the show, Dr. Montague has a strong passion for the supernatural, often talking up a storm about his research. John Morrison plays Dr. Montague to a level unseen in high school theatre. He immediately makes his stage presence known, portraying the investigator as very driven yet careful with his research. Most surprisingly, Morrison plays his character with a level of maturity, truly embodying his character's older aspects; almost fatherly in a way. As they go on to investigate, the spirits of the house specifically target Eleanor Vance, played by Paige Hall, who slowly loses her mind to the house. Hall acts with much emotion in her line delivery as well as in her body language. She manifests fear incredibly well, making it quite believable for the audience.

As strange phenomenon keep occurring, one character stands resilient and bold. Tristan Young plays Theodora as she develops a closer friendship to Eleanor, becoming protective of her at times. Young's portrayal of Theodora is consistent with every scene, even when she isn't speaking. With her audacious actions and luxurious body movements, Young is truly an amazing actress. As tensions rise within the house, heroic and smug Luke Sanderson, played by Jay Carter, often riles up the characters through sarcastic and snide comments. Carter performs the character how they envision Luke acting, making the character their own in the best way possible. As the show continues, the pacing can be off at times, but quickly picks up again through scenes with special effects and lighting to enhance the fear.

The set perfectly fits this dark and sinister story through its modern-day Victorian-esque design. It captures the strangeness of Hill House and fits perfectly with the intricate props and lighting design. The costumes also add another aspect to the setting, making each character unique with each scene. Theodora's costumes are especially great, really grasping the character's personality through fashion.

Fear is described as the brain trying to protect itself. But, from what exactly? Maybe from the unknown or maybe from yourself. Oak Park High School's performance of THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE leaves audience members with a fear of their own mind, truly capturing the unknowingness of the supernatural.

by Sam Littlecreek of Winnetonka High School

--------------------------------------------------

THE HAUNTING OF THE MIND

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a play adapted by F. Andrew Leslie and is based on the 1959 novel written by Shirley Jackson. Taking place at Oak Park High School, the play is about a group of people who come together in the modern Victorian mansion, Hill House. The story begins in a cheery, overly bright sort of fashion, but quickly becomes slightly off-putting, once the main character, played by Paige Hall, is no longer alone on stage.

The story is already slightly unnerving, with the music box at the beginning, which enhances the experience. The chemistry between Eleanor, played by Paige Hall, and Theodora, played by Tristan Young, is immediate upon Theodora's arrival. Though they don't know each other, Theodora and Eleanor become friends in a strange circumstance. The introduction of each character is well-thought out, with Eleanor's honest gallantry and Theodora's knowing flamboyance, it's easy to fall in love with the pair of them. Blocking is matched with vocal inflection to create something realistic.

Throughout the play, Eleanor seems to become more afraid, and her vocal inflections subtly fluctuate. Eleanor's reactions are beautifully practiced and believable. The special effects bring the audience to the edge of their seats. Lighting and sound are an integral part of the production.

In conclusion, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a riveting story about haunted houses, the manifesting of fear, and finding unexpected friendships. Oak Park High School works well together to bring the dark story to life. Lighting and sound are an integral part of the production.

by Terra Coccovizzo of Winnetonka High School