

▶▶ Review

Original monster show has power

FRANKENSTEIN: A YEAR WITHOUT A SUMMER

Bridport Arts Centre

By MARION COX

YOU get double your money's worth with this new play by Helen Davis and staged by the Dorset Corset Theatre Company.

Not only do you get a dramatised version of the Frankenstein horror story, you also get a potted version of the real-life tale outlining how the novel came into being.

It is 1816 and Mary Shelley, Lord Byron and the drug-induced Percy Bysshe Shelley are hanging out beside Lake Geneva when they each agree to write a ghost story for the amusement of one another.

Only Mary completes the task, her tale being inspired by an account which is circulating that electrical impulses can induce muscular spasms and even revive life in corpses.

Live and pre-recorded background music add an atmosphere of doom and mystery to the powerful drama as the three actors portray the Frankenstein story of revenge and retribution.

A simple set is transformed into many guises ranging from the Arctic to an elegant drawing room while the actors don masks to take on a host of different roles.

This is physical theatre at its most riveting and satisfying in a production that elevates the company's growing status.

Natalie Farmer, William Kenning and Gary Trainor are in sizzling form as both actors and musicians in a play that brings integrity to the original story and raises it to a new intellectual dimension.

The production moves to Portland Royal Manor Theatre tonight and to Broadmayne and Dorchester Corn Exchange in the coming weeks.