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## Sparks fly in the park as full house witness an electrifying performance

By Frank Ruhmund

THE PENZANCE-BASED Bash Street Theatre Company not only enjoyed an especially fine evening for its production of *Frankenstein* in Penlee Park, but also deserved the exceptionally large audience it attracted.

Indeed, as sylvan and seductive as the open-air theatre in Penlee Park can be on such a "shirt-sleeve" evening, it was rare to see every seat taken with late-comers having to sit on the grass, for this – the fourth event in this summer's season presented there by the Acorn in association with Penzance Town Council.

Directed by Mike Martins, a re-working of an earlier version by the company of its truncated take on Mary Shelley's classic Gothic novel – and one not to be taken at all seriously – it was played at pace and with considerable courage by its cast of three – Russell Hurd, Jo Jo Pickering and Simon Pullum.

With musical and vocal accompaniment by Matthew Robins, the excitement it generated was electric. It made the sparks fly, quite literally, to such a degree that, given even warmer and drier climatic conditions, the company would have been in danger of starting a bush fire.

A show involving an amusing amount of audience participation (or should it be audience amputation?) it is set in Dr Frankenstein's laboratory where his "amazing scientific discoveries" and, above all, his attempts, all carried out with glee and great good humour, at producing a "man-made man" were revealed, as mirthful as it was magical – I'm still trying to work out how the Pin Cushion Man survived so many swords being thrust at him from all angles without as much as a scratch – at the same time it also somehow managed to capture and convey a sense of the pathos and the sad plight of this crazy scientist's creation.

A tale told without words, except that is for the singing by Matthew Robins, something of a silent movie for today, helped by super clowning and atmospheric sound effects, from its introductory grisly games in the graveyard – judging from the reactions of the many children in the audience, the grislier the better – to the final chase and flight on the sails of the working windmill, this was, in every sense, an electrifying and highly entertaining, 60-non-stop minutes of athletic and acrobatic physical theatre for which the Bash Street Theatre Company is so rightly renowned.