

THE STAGE Reviews

Vampirates

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As Roald Dahl helped teach us - children can handle a little pain in their sweetness and light.

Adapted from Justin Somper's first Vampirates book - an inspired merging of vampires and pirates - Scene Productions grasps the nettle in its suitably eerie transfusion that deals with grief and horror as facts of life and key elements of a fine old yarn.

Starting with the death of their father - played by David Sayers, twins Grace and Connor Tempest - Katharine Hurst and Stuart Walker - are lost at sea and separate, one to a pirate ship and one to an even less savoury encounter involving blood suckers, scary crookbacks, and an ominous sounding "feast".

For seventy minutes the children of Parkhill Junior School were gripped as the three-strong cast miraculously conjured up two separate crews and gave a masterclass in presenting a lot of action in a little space with just a couple of crates, three metal frames and a trio of ingenious trunks with doors in the bottom.

Impressive storytellers the company has also learnt the values of pause and stillness to give the excitable youngsters in the audience the chance to reflect and allow a rare kind of magic to enter the room.

Production information

Redbridge Drama Centre, London, On tour until November 26

Author: Justin Somper, adapted by Gavin Robertson

Director:Gavin Robertson

Producers:Scene Productions, Company Gavin Robertson

Cast:Katharine Hurst, Stuart Walker, David Sayers

Running time:1hr 10mins