



<http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/marlin>

By Damien Millar. Arena Theatre Company and Melbourne Theatre Company. Southbank Theatre, The Lawler. September 25 to 11 October, 2014

Very much like a handsomely presented picture book, Marlin is a series of stunning images that come to life on stage through the stylish design of Marg Horwell. It is the story of a grandfather and granddaughter working together to save the life of a Marlin and navigate the difficulties and dangers they encounter at sea in a small boat.

Christopher Bunworth plays Thomas Grogan a great crusty, old, sometimes a bit cantankerous grandfather and Ashlea Pyke his lively granddaughter Billy. Their relationship is not idealized but quirky and real and both fragile and strong. Jacob Williams is the puppeteer he also plays a benevolent ghostly presence and an eccentric nun to great effect. The Marlin puppet itself glistens with life (Rob Matson).

Humour abounds - the kind of humour that kids like. Ashlea Pyke as Billy is particularly cheeky and wacky at times and convincingly young. In this intense and riveting hour of entertainment there is also suspense and danger and heaps and heaps of foam.

Marlin is superbly lit by Rachel Burke and underscored with music composed by Wang-Zheng Ting that is moving and directly affirming of the emotional content and poetic form of the whole.

The subject matter undoubtedly surrounds grief and loss – so kids recently bereaved could probably do with a little guidance and the opportunity to debrief after seeing this excellent work.

Top notch theatre for kids!

Suzanne Sandow



Director – Christian Leavesley
Designer – Marg Horwell
Lighting Designer – Rachel Burke
Sound Designer Jethro Woodward
Composer – Wang-Zheng Ting
Puppetry - Rob Matson

Photographer: Pia Johnson