

MARLIN

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The MTC and Arena Theatre Co present *Marlin* – a tale about Billie, her granddad Thomas and a marlin called Kevin. A wondrous theatre experience for audiences aged 8+.

When: until 11 October 2014, various times. [Check website](#) for details and to book tickets.

Where: MTC Southbank Theatre, The Lawler 140 Southbank Boulevard SOUTHBANK

Cost: \$25



Review

I took with me two (almost) nine year-old girls to the opening night performance of *Marlin*.

As we exited the theatre at the end of the show a relatively well known Melbourne identity turned to me and she asked: “what age do you think this show would appeal to?” To which I suggested I would go and ask my two little dates (who had charged ahead) their opinion, and she replied “just look back over to me and give me a thumbs up or down when you find out if they liked it”. Thankfully it was two big thumbs up.

The story itself has some rather dark moments – there is a bit to contemplate. Billie’s father was lost at sea (and we’re under no illusion that he’s anything other than dead) and her mother (we’re not exactly sure why, but possibly she didn’t cope with dad’s disappearance very well) has left her/abandoned her to be cared for and raised by her grandfather. We learn that Granddad is mourning the loss of his wife (who is also dead) and possibly not altogether coping with raising a young girl who is entering her early teens. (Although when he has this breakdown/outburst he’s clearly under a lot of stress as he’s facing the responsibility of possibly his and Billie’s demise out at sea due to some poor planning and bad luck.)

But it’s the tension of these bad times that help us see how truly Billie and her grandfather need each other and love each other – and how this experience helps them both make some sense of their situation and reveal their respect of each other. And when it comes to the sad or gritty bits of the story this is where the ever wise eight year olds look at me (when I quiz them about how they felt about this) and say “you know that it was just a story...”. Okay I worry too much!

There is much that delights about this production – both characters are fabulously portrayed by the actors, and the puppet work of the marlin and gull are fantastic. You will not be disappointed by the amazing set which brings the sea to life in the most extraordinary way – make sure you have a few minutes to spare at the end of the show to head down to the front and check it out.

Seating isn’t allocated – and I highly recommend sitting in the front row if you have kids who would like to be sprayed with bubbles and possibly water!

The production is over an hour long (about 70 minutes) without an interval.