



Preview: Cautionary Tales for Children

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30 Jan, 2012 11:36 AM

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IT might be a tough one to sell to the kids at first: a cabaret show filled with absurd cautionary tales about what happens to naughty children. But Mark Jones, composer and performer in Arena Theatre Company's Cautionary Tales for Children, insists it's a good time for the whole family.

The tales, written by poet Hilaire Belloc in the early 1900s, are "satirical and moralistic", according to Jones. He says families may become immersed in the interactive adaptation because children are encouraged to "boo and hiss" in support of those on stage who are suffering as a result of the moral lessons. The children in the audience will have a chance to prove that they're just as influential as adults. "The characters are trapped in 2012 and the only way to get back to their own time in the 1900s is with the children's help," Jones explains. He adds that the performance is "quite ridiculously colourful" and it's something that parents will enjoy just as much as kids.

It's also an opportunity to see a cast of seasoned performers including Rosemarie Harris (Shane Warne: The Musical), Melbourne Theatre Company regular performer Christen O'Leary and more.

Cautionary Tales is part of the Arts Centre's Carnegie 18: New Music Theatre Series which shows productions that are still in creative development and haven't had a formal premiere, meaning tickets are priced at the accessible end of the spectrum. Some culture, cabaret, laughs and life lessons – if only Belloc was around to see his verse in its modern incarnation.