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Pinocchio

Published **Friday 18 December 2009** at **14:40** by **Fiona Phillips**

Perfect for all the family can mean one of two things - it's your usual panto fare of formulaic slapstick for the kids and smut directed at the adults, or, as is the case with the Torch Theatre Company's Pinocchio, it is aimed squarely at the under-tens.

Written by artistic director Peter Doran and musical director James Williams, it's the familiar story of how goodness, truthfulness and kindness triumph over evil and treads a fine line between entertainment and preachiness.

Beautifully set, with designs by the talented Sean Crowley, the small cast is helped by fine singing from Buddug Verona James as the blue fairy and great choreography. Tom Cullen as Foxy stands out as a particularly fine characterisation - part Fagin, part buffoon, but always eminently watchable. He is helped out by Catherine Morris as Felina the cat. It's always hard to pitch the level of evil for baddies when the audience is predominantly children - too scary and the youngsters are traumatised, not scary enough and the audience isn't sure whether to boo or cheer - but this pair get it just right.

A really physical performance from Russell Clough as Pinocchio makes the show a pacy treat while admirable support is offered by Mike Neary as Gepetto and local young actors as the bad boys. However, Lampwick (Jake Norton) jars with a performance of the adult playing a kid type that puts you in mind of particularly nasty Violet Elizabeth Bott.

Pinocchio is recommended viewing if you are in search of some magic this Christmas, but you'll need to watch it with a child to get the full effect.

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Production information

Torch, Milford Haven, December 28-January 2

Authors: Peter Doran, James Williams

Director: Peter Doran

Producer: Torch Theatre

Cast includes: Russell Clough, Mike Neary, Buddug Verona James, Tom Cullen, Catherine Morris, Jake Norton, Molly Furnival, Emily Kaijaks, Harry Furnival, Tylor Goodrick, Tamsin Mathias, Kezia Tooby, Emily Carling, Jennifer Biddle, Cheyenne Shinner

Running time: 2hrs 10mins

Production information can change over the run of the show.

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