

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe REVIEW – The Tempest in the Firth of Forth \*\*\*\*



The Tempest in the Firth of Forth, Summerhall at Hopetoun House South Queensferry. To 15 August 2013.

Richard Demarco has long been evangelical about his support for Shakespeare at the Edinburgh festivals and this year he is sponsoring The Tempest in the Firth of Forth as part of the Summerhall programme. As we depart, Demarco treats his audience to a personal welcome on the bus followed by a short contextual lecture emphasising the importance of place in his festival productions. And he has chosen a unique venue, the beach at Hopetoun House, for this, his favourite play. Distantly opposite Rosyth dockyard it may be, but on a balmy Friday afternoon with waves lapping at the shore, it is just as effective a location for an enchanted island as Inchcolm proved to be for Macbeth's battlegrounds and castles in Demarco's production last year. Caliban can emerge, literally, from a mound of shells. Trinculo and Stephano stagger and jape down the beach trapped between the water and the sea wall.

Ferdinand and Miranda toy with real driftwood as they flirt. Ariel and Prosperous survey the romance and chaos from the top of the rocks on the beach.

The characters are colourfully drawn and, with a cast from the University of St Andrews performing with youthful exuberance and abandon, the effect is almost automatically pleasing. The cast perhaps inhabit the younger and more supernatural characters more easily than the elder ones but all perform well, although some are slightly soft spoken for

the many acoustic challenges of the setting and a mobile audience.

Few productions embody the spirit of the Fringe quite like this one but, unlike Demarco, the wild and crazy Summerhall collective is only in its second Fringe year. With their support his passion for Shakespeare in the Scottish countryside could form an important part of his artistic legacy in decades to come or, at least in the short term, an annual treat in a surprise wild setting.



Main photo shows Prospero (Sunny Moodie) with daughter Miranda (Siannie Moodie)

Secondary photo shows Caliban (Lewis Harding) and Stephano (Peter Swallow) with an invisible Ariel (Lucy Manning) looking on

Reviewed by Ronald Orr