

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 REVIEW – Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs 2 : The Magic Cutlass \*\*\*



It might be worth pointing out that I am not 5 years old. I was born in the nineties, before Pokémon Go, iPads, and Oyster Cards. That was a time of jelly shoes, *The Singing Kettle*, and those funny credit card receipt machines where you press the details onto a piece of paper with a plastic slider.

My point is that *Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs 2: The Magic Cutlass* is not aimed primarily at me, or anyone over the age of about 6.


Brought to life by **Les Petits Theatre**, the play is an adaptation of the sequel of **Giles Andreae's** successful *Captain Flinn* series, and tells the story of a school play rehearsal that becomes reality as the precocious Flinn and his crew are transported to the pirate dinosaur ship of Captain T. Rex.

☒ Where the play succeeds is with its use of puppetry. Captain T. Rex's stunning seven-foot tall body was menacing but also comical, with much fun made of his too-short arms.

The costume was reminiscent of the **National Theatre of Scotland's** work with the **Transform: Aberdeen** project. The sequence under the sea was beautiful staged in shadow puppetry and skilfully executed. The score, too, was exciting and well thought through. Of the actors, **Patrick Warner** was the most engaging, although **Rosie Nicholls'** singing was lovely.

I was not, however, so convinced by the narrative. Perhaps I

was slightly lost because I haven't seen the instalment before *The Magic Cutlass*, but the play-within-a-play narrative left the plot feeling muddled. There were many unexplained aspects of the plot – why were dinosaurs eating sausages? Were they friendly or unfriendly towards Flinn and his crew? Why do the children disappear from their teacher's view if the section on the dinosaur's ship is imaginary?

The play encourages children and grown ups to embrace the  child-like narrative, written as if by a group of schoolchildren and presented as a school production; a pantomime even.

The problem here is that there is a fine line between well-written pantomime and poorly written farce. Any jokes aimed at parents in the audience fell flat, in a weak imitation of a subtle art perfected by studios such as Pixar.

I must, nevertheless, return to my earlier point. This play is not intended for me.

The atmosphere was fun and the children embraced the more bizarre aspects of the plot – the little boy behind me spent much of the second act screaming 'RAWRRRR' whenever a dinosaur came on stage. Such interruptions were welcomed. *Captain Flinn* is a well executed, if muddled, extravaganza that will enthral children even if adults in the audience are left firmly on dry land.



**Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs 2: The Magic Cutlass:**

10.30am, 3rd Aug 2016 – 29th Aug 2016 (no show on 16th August), [Pleasance One – Pleasance Courtyard](#) (Venue 33). Tickets £12/£10.50 from the **Fringe Box Office** [here](#). Suitable for ages 2+, but please note this performance contains haze and flashing lights. *Photos: The Other Richard*

