

ENTERTAINMENT

Peter Pan: Thrills and nostalgia

Peter Pan
Citadel/Maclab Theatre
through Jan. 6

review by Anna Borowiecki

When the fantasy adventure, *Peter Pan* was first written by James Barrie eighty years ago, it delighted both audiences and critics. The Citadel's recent production of *Peter Pan* in the Maclab Theatre enchanted children and provided a shot of nostalgia for adults.

Peter Pan (Kevin Williams) flies into the bedroom of the Darling children looking for his shadow. He awakens and entices the children into flying to Neverland, a world where children never grow up. It is a world free of adults and full of high adventure with fairies, pirates, mermaids, Indians and Lost Boys.

The Lost Boys have either been abandoned or have run away from their parents. In Neverland they have the freedom to enjoy all the possible 'pretend' adventures. But they also lack and yearn for the love and tenderness provided by a mother. Peter and the Lost Boys live in an underground house eating pretend nuts and drinking pretend cocoa. Their friends are the Indians and their enemies are Pirates.

Captain Hook, the terror of Neverland, is Peter's adversary and he is always concocting various schemes to destroy the Lost Boys. Hook struts the deck of his ship wearing a red plumed hat, a gleaming sword and a sharp claw instead of a hand. The black and white crossbones on the ship's mast and plank for walking enemies are his emblems.

Graeme Campbell plays the dual role of the wicked Captain Hook as well as the ineffectual but pompous Mr. Darling. Campbell plunges into both roles with the experience and professionalism of a veteran actor creating two delightful and intriguing opposite



Photo Tim Hellum

"Har and avast!" cries Captain Hook (Graeme Campbell) as he takes aim at a nimble Peter Pan (Kevin Williams).

characters. Unfortunately, he is constantly upstaged by the cutesiness of the children, especially Kevin Williams.

Williams is a bold, young lad who is visually perfect for Peter Pan, the boy who pretends to himself he doesn't want to grow up. However, his minimal theatrical experience places him at a disadvantage to fulfill the strenuous demands of the play. His acting looks amateurish and it is only Gordon McDougall's clever directing that gives Peter Pan credibility. However, it is not the fault of

Williams but of casting directors who chose an inexperienced young boy to play a role requiring the professionalism of adults.

The performances of Diane Fajrajsl and Judith Mabey deserve a special mention. Fajrajsl, who has the dual roles of Nana, the dog, and the man-eating Crocodile, often kept the audience in stitches. And Mabey took complete command of the stage as the tender-hearted Mrs. Darling.

But despite excellent acting from some actors, the real stars of Peter Pan are the

technical elements. Trapdoors, swordfights, flying machinery, foot-high mushrooms, chair-size pumpkins and moving tables captured the imagination of the audience. However, all the overpowering theatrical elements coupled with the children's cutesiness take away from the play.

James Barrie's script was written to take a penetrating look into children's world through their eyes. And on the adult level, the script was a psychological study of role-playing and the dangers of lying to yourself. However, many of the polarities in the script are not developed. *Peter Pan* could provide substance as well as glitz, but it just doesn't come up to snuff.

Peter Pan plays at the Citadel's Maclab Theatre until Jan. 6.

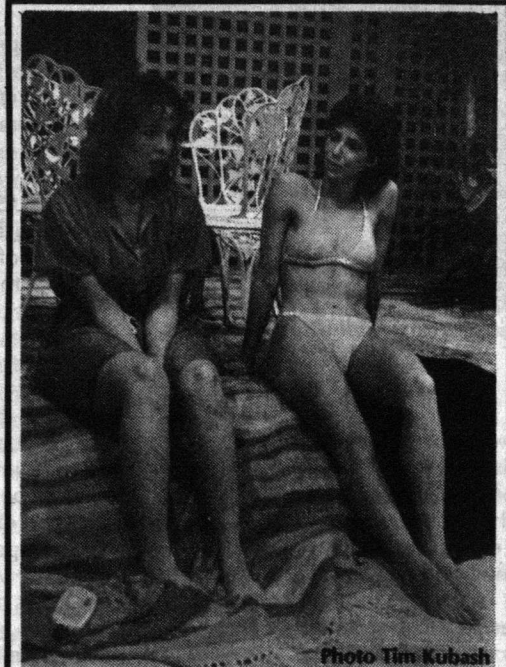


Photo Tim Kubash

Sneak preview: Here's a look at the innovative beach set of *O.D. on Paradise*, a Workshop West production opening at the Kaasa Theatre tonight.

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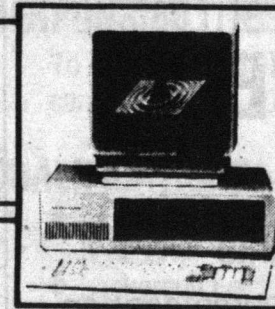
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