

Children's Theatre Reviews

Playfully taking theatre for young audiences seriously

Top 10 Shows of 2015

December 26, 2015 · by [flossiewaite](#) · in [Blogs](#), [Uncategorized](#) ·

These are Editor Flossie Waite's pick of the top 10 shows seen in 2015. As a London-based blogger, every effort was made to see companies from across the UK and beyond, but the shows were produced in or toured to London. We really want to increase our national coverage – can you help? Contact flossie.waite@gmail.com

The Poetry Joe Show

A Word Pepper Theatre Production

Seen at [Half Moon Theatre \(https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/\)](https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/)

“They don't call Joe Coelho 'Poetry Joe' for nothing – here is a seriously talented writer-performer who wears his genius lightly. If you don't mind briefly losing your hearing as a young audience plead (read: scream, loudly) for another poem, *The Poetry Joe Show* is for you.” [Read the full review here.](#) (<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/03/30/the-poetry-joe-show/>)



(<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/03/30/the-poetry-joe-show/>)

The Paper Dolls

A Little Angel and Polka Theatre production

Little Angel Theatre

“They say that lightning doesn't strike twice, but whatever magic went into the original book is decidedly present here. I can guess that it has something to do with the chemistry between puppeteers Andrea Sadler and Jane Crawshaw, and something else to do with Julian Butler's music elevating every scene. Lyndie Wright's set design places the stage inside a rectangular wooden structure, framing the action as if it were on the page. Except this isn't a picturebook, and Rosie's imagination is free to fly out into the audience.” [Read the full review here.](#) (<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/04/26/the-paper-dolls/>)



Signor Baffo's Restaurant
OH Productions and Worboys Productions
Seen at Watermans Centre

"In this very interactive, and very messy, piece of theatre, Harrison is a perfect host, able to whip the audience into hysterics but always in control. In the performance I saw, an overjoyed group of children became an unplanned mob who momentarily descended the stage, but Harrison, cool as a cucumber, made sure everyone got back to their seats quickly and safely without breaking character (or a sweat). That said, he is also eminently cheeky and exuberant, with a marvellous moustache to boot!" [Read the full review here. \(http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/06/01/signor-baffos-restaurant/\)](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/06/01/signor-baffos-restaurant/)



Peter Pan
Regent's Park Theatre Ltd
Regent's Park Open Air Theatre (<https://openairtheatre.com/>)

"When he originally wrote *Peter Pan*, J.M. Barrie couldn't foresee that just a few years later, the boys that inspired it would be directly caught in warfare. And yet, watching this production in the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, you feel as though he must have known, and that directors Timothy Sheader and Liam Steel have found a version that was always there, waiting to be discovered." [Read the full review here. \(http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/05/27/j-m-barries-peter-pan/\)](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/05/27/j-m-barries-peter-pan/)



Light Show
An Oily Cart production
Seen at [artsdepot \(https://www.artsdepot.co.uk/\)](https://www.artsdepot.co.uk/)

2 of 5 *Light Show* offers children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, or on the autism spectrum, an invitation into a papery world of weather. It is a world that starts before the theatre

doors even open, and lasts until puppet Baz has accompanied every child back into the foyer: rarely is a theatre experience so complete or well thought-out." [Read the full review here.](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/09/28/light-show/) (<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/09/28/light-show/>)



Map of Me

A Papertale production in association with Apples and Snakes (South East)

Seen at [Half Moon Theatre \(https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/\)](https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/)

"There have been 530,265 asylum applications in the EU over the last ten months. 2,988 people have died crossing the Mediterranean in 2015. The UK has accepted 216 Syrian refugees since January last year. The refugee crisis is all over the news, but it's hard to imagine numbers. *Map of Me* scales it down to 1: a girl." [Read the full review here.](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/10/13/map-of-me/) (<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/10/13/map-of-me/>)



Rise Up

A Theatre Centre production

Seen at [Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre](#)

"Theatre Centre has a dream: to encourage youth activism through the arts. The company's bid to empower the young leaders of tomorrow begins with showing them the young leaders of the past. *Rise Up* is an original play about the Freedom Riders, students who travelled by Greyhound Bus into America's Deep South to peacefully protest racial segregation during the Civil Rights Movement. It's perhaps not fashionable to have such clear aims for children's theatre – last year Purni Morell, Artistic Director of Unicorn Theatre, captured the current mood with an [impassioned speech about 'art for art's sake'](http://www.roh.org.uk/news/theatre-and-the-arts-are-not-about-the-curriculum-or-a-fix-for-societys-problems) (<http://www.roh.org.uk/news/theatre-and-the-arts-are-not-about-the-curriculum-or-a-fix-for-societys-problems>). Despite this, *Rise Up* is timely: as the arts finds its feet under the funding cuts and current political climate, Theatre Centre have chosen a compassionate and uncompromising way forward." [Read the full review here.](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/10/05/rise-up/) (<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/10/05/rise-up/>)



I Want My Hat Back
A National Theatre production
National Theatre

“A couple of years ago, there was a big to-do when the National Theatre’s 50th anniversary gala included only one female playwright, bringing attention to how often women writers have been overlooked throughout its history. How can the National Theatre only represent half the nation? critics said. Imagine a world where there was a similar uproar about the lack of children’s theatre included. “Sure, *War Horse* was in there, but that was it!” the bloggers would have cried. “Over the past five decades, just look at how few productions were aimed at people under 18 years old. There are over 11 million children in England – you can’t forget that part of the population!” *I Want My Hat Back* suggests that this parallel universe might be much closer than it seemed in 2013 – the National Theatre is, finally, taking children’s theatre seriously.”



We Are The Monsters
Colette Sadler – Stammer Productions
Seen at the Southbank Centre

“*We Are The Monsters* is joyous – the joy of movement, of material, of occasional madness. This is a game-changing production that should shape performances for children in the zaniest of ways.”

[Read the full review here. \(http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/12/15/we-are-the-monsters/\)](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/12/15/we-are-the-monsters/)



The Bear
A Pins and Needles production
Seen at Polka Theatre (<http://www.polkatheatre.com/>)

4 of 5 “If Raymond Briggs is renowned for penning classic Christmas stories, Pins and Needles is fast gaining a reputation for their stellar adaptations of his work. Having already created a superb

stage version of *Father Christmas* (<http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2014/11/27/raymond-briggs-father-christmas/>) (now an annual tradition at Lyric Hammersmith), the company have turned to his later work *The Bear*." [Read the full review here. \(http:// childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/11/02/the-bear/\)](http://childrenstheatrereviews.com/2015/11/02/the-bear/)



Follow Children's Theatre Reviews on Twitter [@ctheatrereviews](https://twitter.com/ctheatrereviews) (<https://twitter.com/ctheatrereviews>)

About these ads (<https://wordpress.com/about-these-ads/>)

- 42%

24,90 €

Zum Shop

- 33%

Tags: [artsdepot](#), [Half Moon Theatre](#), [I Want My Hat Back](#), [Joe Coelho](#), [Light Show](#), [Little Angel Theatre](#), [Map of Me](#), [National Theatre](#), [Oily Cart](#), [Peter Pan](#), [Polka Theatre](#), [Regent's Park Open Air Theatre](#), [Rise Up](#), [Signor Baffo's Restaurant](#), [Southbank Centre](#), [The Bear](#), [The Paper Dolls](#), [The Poetry Joe Show](#), [Theatre Centre](#), [Watermans Centre](#), [We Are The Monsters](#)

[Blog at WordPress.com.](#) | [The Oxygen Theme.](#)