

## Review: Red Riding Hood and the Wolf at Little Angel Theatre

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*A vital lesson: B. L. Sherrington reviews Jon Barton's reimagining of this classic children's tale and finds hope in the enlightened education it provides.*

[B. L. SHERRINGTON](#)



Red Riding Hood and the Wolf at the Little Angel Theatre.

When you think of the fairytales you read as a child, your mind jumps straight to the innocent victim being attacked by some ghastly creature, before a handsome stranger, some knight in shining armour, comes riding in on a white horse and saves the day, right? But how many of us are so naive that we honestly believe someone is coming to fix our lives for us?

So I want to thank Jon Barton for completely flipping the script with *Red Riding Hood and the Wolf*, and teaching the children of today that life isn't as black and white as that. And also to thank director Jimmy Grimes for bringing Barton's vivid imagery to life.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Telling the story Little Red Riding Hood from the Wolf's point of view, Barton's one-woman children's show portrays this classic villain not as a big, bad predator but instead as a victim of Little Red Riding Hood and her Grandmother, who plot to lure him into their cottage and kill him.

It's a cunning creative path to take. Let's be honest, how many kids really are sweet little angels? Each and every one of them likes to embellish a story for effect, so it's perfectly plausible to believe that old red riding hood perhaps wasn't really made of sugar, spice and all things nice.

We first meet Charlotte Croft's Robyn in her bedroom at bedtime, surrounded by puppets and embodying a childish imagination and innocence. Alison Alexander's set design is every inch the living space of a young child desperate to defy her mother's bedtime rules, and her puppetry, which Croft's Robyn uses to stage this reimagined story, is the perfect complement to that.

A theme we see flowing through *Red Riding Hood and the Wolf* is that of acceptance. At a time when people across the globe are still fighting for civil rights – be they sexuality, gender or race related – teaching the next generation not to judge on appearances seems a vital lesson. Charity is also a major motif: the Wolf ends up helping Red Riding Hood and her Grandmother, despite their initial murderous impulses. It's an introduction that emphasises the importance of compassion towards everyone, no matter how rotten they may be.

It wouldn't be a Little Angel Theatre production without puppetry, and Croft's deft skill brings the personality of the supporting characters to life in a manner perfect for a children's production. The makeshift puppets not only find use as storytellers, but also bring plenty of comedy with their regional dialects.

While this use of puppetry is a massive part of the success of this production, Luis Alvarez's lighting and Adam Pleeth's original music are also crucial, providing the necessary amount of suspense to capture the drama of the tale, without ever being too overwhelming for the young audience.

*Red Riding Hood and the Wolf* is at Little Angel Theatre until July 16th. For more details, [click here](#).

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