

GRAVE DELIGHT

Rain or Shine Theatre Company.

The Tempest, Penlee Park, Penzance.

Review by Frank Ruhmund

TO SUM up the Gloucester-based company's version of *The Tempest*, borrowing from the Bard: "The park was full of noises, sounds and sweet airs, that gave delight and hurt not." Although it didn't hurt, it did surprise.

Directed by James Reynard, who also played Prospero, while the production lived up to its claim of being full of magic and mystery, and all praise to set designer JM Fox and costumier Jayne Meekings whose contributions helped enormously in that respect, it surprised in the way in which Caliban was promoted as star of the show. More usually regarded as the villain of the piece, here if anything he was the king of comedy. Ellis J Wells, who also played the convincing lover Ferdinand, made the very most of his chances upon the throne, both his body language and voice were excellent, so too were his mixing with and managing of the play's recognised comedians Anthony Young as the drunken butler Stephano and Rob Keeves as the jester Trinculo.

They received splendid support from Pippa Meekings as Miranda whose first sight of an attractive member of the opposite sex was as believable as it was amusing, Claire Tucker as the airy, all-seeing spirit Ariel, and producer Jayne Lloyd as Alonso, King of Naples.

Rain or Shine's first visit to Cornwall, while it may not have been a perfect storm, this was a *Tempest* which not only made one smile after the curtain came down, but also left one hoping that the company will come again, perhaps next summer when it will be touring *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.