

The Tempest review



James Reynard, Pippa Meekings and Ellis J Wells in Rain or Shine Theatre Company's *The Tempest*. Photo: Tony Hickey

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 by [Jeremy Brien](#) - Jul 1, 2015

Open-air Shakespeare performed in the grounds of a school founded just 18 years after his death carries a special frisson.

Rain or Shine Theatre Company's artistic director James Reynard, who carries the additional burden of interpreting Prospero's (and Shakespeare's) requiem to his art in the great "Our revels now are ended" speech, has mainly gone for a light-hearted approach, while only occasionally viewing *The Tempest* as a parable of good and evil.

The technique of having the players create the sounds and spirits of the enchanted isle works well, while on the more serious side, Prospero's constant battle to keep his magical staff under control is a powerful image of his rough magic.

Shakespeare's other message, of the power of love overcoming the desire for revenge, is mirrored both in the scenes of joyous first love between Miranda – lent more self-assurance than usual by Pippa Meekings – and Ellis J Wells' Ferdinand, and in the downfall of the villainous plot on Prospero's life by Caliban, an impressively contrasting double by Wells.

Rob Keeves plays a particularly annoying Trinculo, and Anthony Young, a self-serving Stephano, keeping the comic scenes in the forefront of the action, while Claire Tucker brings a mystical touch to the fantasy world as Ariel.

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Production information

Venue	Red Maids' School
City	Bristol
Starts	June 30, 2015
Ends	June 30, 2015, then touring until August 30, 2015
Press night	June 30, 2015
Author	William Shakespeare
Director	James Reynard
Artistic Director	James Reynard
Technical	Ken Meekings (electrician)
Cast includes	James Reynard, Pippa Meekings, Ellis J Wells, Claire Tucker, Rob Keeves, Anthony Young, Jayne Lloyd
Producer	Rain or Shine Theatre Company
Running time	2hr 10mins