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Noddy in Toyland

Published Thursday 20 August 2009 at 11:20 by **Abigail Webber**

It's Noddy's 60th anniversary year and, judging from the reaction to this touring show, he is clearly still hugely popular with young audiences. The emphasis is on 'young', however - the production is straightforward and undemanding, while being unashamedly entertaining. It's perfect for three to six-year-olds, but might feel a touch unimaginative to anyone older.



The main characters - cheerful Noddy, wise Big Ears, kind Tessie Bear, bumbling Mr Plod and robot Whiz - are played by a very enthusiastic cast of actors dressed in huge costumes with giant heads, so they look reassuringly like the cartoon originals. The two cheeky goblins, Sly and Gobbo, played by actors without these gigantic suits, appear smaller and their voices aren't amplified, which proved a bit confusing for the children sitting around me. However, the plot is easily followed and enjoyably resolved - the naughty goblins are determined to spoil everyone's fun, and their plans are cleverly and amusingly foiled by Noddy.

The story is interspersed with lots of slapstick, visual humour, which the younger children lap up and the older ones enjoy predicting, and there is plenty of rowdy audience participation. Songs about teamwork and the value of friendship gently underline the simple morality of Noddy's world and the big dance session that accompanies the finale appeals to children of all ages.

Although older children (and parents) have come to expect an increasing level of variety and sophistication in children's theatre, the energy and simple charm of this show will delight the little ones.

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Production information

Civic Hall, Broxbourne, August 18-19, then touring until May 1

Authors: Nick George, Jason Francis

Director: Jason Francis

Producers: Nick George, Jason Francis

Cast includes: Jo Azzopardi, Steve King, Paul Winterford, Lauren Thundow, Justine Sim, Rebecca Howard

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