

# LOVINGLY CREATED TRIBUTE IS THOROUGHLY ENTERTAINING

## [PIPPY LONGSTOCKING](#)

by Astrid Lindgren

adapted by Tim Bray

Directed by Amanda Rees

Tim Bray Productions

at [The Pumphouse, Takapuna](#), Auckland

Until 27 Jul 2013

Reviewed by Jan Maree, 14 Jul 2013

As a child I was an avid reader and the spunky antics of Pippi Longstocking made me a fan from page one. You can only imagine my excitement as I sit in the auditorium watching families file in and take seats, many of their children clear fans of Pippi too. Some are resplendent in costume tributes to *Pippi* (my favourite is a Mr Nelson who tells me very proudly that his mum and his grandmother built his costume but he made the tail!). Cue the line-up of little Pippi look-alikes bowing to applause on stage.

This is what Tim Bray has become known best for in the last decade: his adaptations of classic children's literature. And in this instance he can stand proud of what he has brought about.

From the very beginning of the show I am blown away by the excellent physicality of the cast. They knit together well and look relaxed. In her notes, director Amanda Rees mentions it is a great stroke of luck to find a cast with multiple talents, both acting and acrobatic, and indeed it is. They are great at multi tasking, as all but Pippi are in and out of costumes for the duration as they fulfil several roles within the story.

We watch on with delight as Pippi (impressively played by T-Ann Manora) explains she is somewhat an orphan, living with her monkey Mr Nelson in Villekulla Cottage. The neighbouring children Tommy and Annika (played exceptionally by Josephine Stewart) befriend her and the adventures start.

Pippi beats the bullies, makes pancakes and proves herself an adequate parent (putting herself to bed is a classic for any grown-up who has tried to put a child to bed) and of course she is reunited with her father. And so it goes along, the bright set and sparkling costumes as fitting accompaniment to solid singing, dancing and roller skating action.

I am constantly wowed by Pippi. Her physical prowess is impressive; she embodies Pippi's spunk and enthusiasm for unconventional living with ease.

Stephen Butterworth's work (as Bengt, Thunder Carlson, Constable Roger Fisk and of course Captain Longstocking) is also exceptional, though knowing how good his voice is, I wish he could

get more singing time. Christine White's music is charming and a great match to the script.

This is a thoroughly entertaining children's show that I've really loved seeing; I encourage childless adult fans not to feel at all odd going along. It is a lovingly created tribute to Pippi, and any fan of any age will find it a pleasure.

Note: Parents planning to let your little ones roam into the aisles and play during the performance, be warned. When Mr Nelson comes barrelling up our side of the seating, a toddler doing just that is startled to screaming and tears. Keep your kids in their seats!

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