

# British Theatre Guide

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## Peter Pan

Andrew Ryan

Martin Dodd for UK Productions

Grand Theatre, Blackpool

6 December 2013–5 January 2014

Never mind refusing to grow up, this is the Peter Pan that never lets you stop laughing.

It's uproarious pantomime from start to finish, as ribald or as risqué as your age group demands. From the moment that Steve Royle quite literally drops back into his comedy fixture character, all the way through to Jordan Lee Davies's final ascent—in the title role—towards the Grand's magnificent ceiling, this is a show with a single-minded devotion to lifting your spirits and making you smile.

To achieve that it lets every one of the cast in on the joke, with the laugh lines spread pretty democratically throughout. So one-time *Emmerdale* bad boy Tom Lister positively revels in his punning Captain Hook—even earning hearty booing in his dual role of Mr Darling, which must be a first?

Likewise Hayley Kay laps up her one-liners as Mrs Darling and Mermaid, while Lee Davies suggests a nice-but-dim Pan. It's a confident performance that shows the former *Voice* contestant has wider talents.

Andrew Ryan's script is sharp and original throughout but with enough leeway to allow Steve Royle to go 'off-road' wherever he likes. Like many an accomplished comedian he has a matching acting ability, knowing when to react, corpse and improvise. Charming and cheeky almost simultaneously.

This year his juggling skills are limited to mops, buckets and cutlasses but there's also plenty of physical thrills from a Nitwits pirate crew of Chris Gage, Tristan Adams and Alex Tucker.

Their acrobatic showcase (again played for laughs) is tucked in near the end of the show but you suspect that's simply because director Simon Rawlings has packed so much more in elsewhere.

There are topical nods to TV quiz shows, current dance and song crazes, and a terrific *X Factor*-style build-up to Hook's first entrance.

Even the one or two rough edges on opening night become part of the charm of a show eager to please on so many levels—especially when it first lifts its hero high above the audience.

**Reviewer:** [David Upton](#)