

The Ceilidh Tree

The Stage - Review

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Aimed at children between three and five, The Ceilidh Tree is a gentle story-telling session within an intimate and comfortable space. The young audience are welcomed with blankets before woods person Vivien Grahame arrives with her furry animal friends and tales of their adventures,



Vivien Grahame in Giant's touring production of The Ceilidh Tree.

Photo by: Maria McCavana

Grahame's warmth and vivacity attracts the children: shy at first, they are soon joining in and laughing at the antics of the tree-climbing badger and a morose bunny. Switching between straight story-telling and folk-inspired musical numbers, Grahame holds their attention skilfully until the calming finale.

Claire Halleran deserves praise for her set. Through simple screens and incorporating the seating onto the stage, she mimics the traditional story-telling circle, leaving enough to the children's imagination while suggesting a midwinter forest. Steve Moffat's violin is atmospheric and subdued. The Ceilidh Tree thrives through the synthesis of set, music and performance, bonding with the demanding yet charmed audience.

Managing to be comforting and lively by turns, The Ceilidh Tree avoids the superficial glamour of much modern children's television and theatre, relying on a more traditional, polished approach. These light and amusing woodland tales are a wonderful introduction to the theatre for young children, capturing their attention and never patronising them.

Link to website review:

<http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/22304/the-ceilidh-tree>