



Year 8 Home Learning Task  
Drama  
Peter Pan Goes Wrong Review



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Group \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Given out: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January

Hand in: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January

Parent/ Carer Comment

Staff Comment

Target

# JUST A MINUTE

## THE BRIEF

Your task for this week is to prepare a **One Minute Review** of **'Peter Pan Goes Wrong** by Mischief Theatre Company.

What will you be learning?

- You will be learning how to structure a review of a performance. You will also be learning to prepare and put on a timed presentation. This is important in all aspects of work where you will have to present to an audience. The timed element is especially important in the world of business where you might encounter giving timed pitches for products.
- Oracy - you need to be able to speak clearly and slowly in your review and give clearly thought out justification for your opinions.

What will you need to do?

- Prepare your review- make prompt cards to help structure your review and allow you to talk to your audience. Practise your speech so you aren't just reading from a piece of paper but you are able to engage your audience with eye contact.
- Justify your opinions - make sure that any opinion made is backed up with justification. Eg don't say 'I didn't like Smith's performance.' Instead say 'I found Smith's performance rather stiff and this meant that didn't work for a character that is supposed to be flamboyant and upbeat.'

To really 'Wow!' me...

- Find out some additional information about the production (eg a little bit of information on the director of the play) that isn't obvious from just watching it.

Tutor Time Reading Task

- Read through the reviews (next pages) by Lyn Gardner and Dominic Cavendish (**DO NOT COPY THEIR WORDS**) as they are reviews of the same show and might help with ideas of how to start and what to talk about.

REVIEW BY LYN GARDNER

# Peter Pan Goes Wrong review – slick mischief and catastrophic concussions (3 stars)

Over the years, I've seen plenty of Peter Pans going wrong, on occasion crash-landing with a spectacular lack of concern for the cast's future careers and an audience's desire to ever venture inside a theatre again.

Those mishaps were, of course, unintentional. Here, Mischief Theatre know exactly what they are doing, playing on the audience's pleasure in backstage and onstage catastrophes. With their sleeper West End hit, The Play That Goes Wrong, Mischief have neatly mined the comic possibilities of a creaky country house murder mystery being assaulted by the combined egos of the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society, a group of amateur actors so inept that what can go wrong, inevitably does. Doors refuse to open, scenery collapses and performers upstage each other as private grudges create mayhem.

There's more of the same on offer in this harmlessly goofy entertainment that gets the audience onside even before the action begins with some likable to-and-fro and a comic mobile-phone announcement. It comes with the added benefit that pretty well everyone is familiar with JM Barrie's story about Wendy, John and Michael's trip to Neverland in the company of the obstreperous Tinkerbell (whose tutu is attached to the mains supply with electrifying results) and the boy who refuses to grow up, and seems unlikely ever to do so, given the amount of concussion sustained.

There are unlimited possibilities for mishaps where stage flying is involved. When Gladys Cooper played Peter Pan in the 1920s, she had rows with the stage hands, who took their revenge during the flying sequences by bouncing her off the scenery like a wrecking ball. Here the thin line between the arrogance of the Peter Pan character and the amateur actor playing him is cleverly excavated, as Peter constantly, and not entirely inexplicably, finds himself dangling upside down.

Directed by Adam Meggido, this is a slicker affair than The Play That Goes Wrong, and has the added bonus of the presence of David Suchet as a narrator constantly upstaged by his chair. There's good work, too, from Dave Hearn as Max, who has only been cast because his aunt works at the BBC; Nancy Zamit as Annie, a multiple quick-change failure, and Ellie Morris as the stagefright-afflicted Lucy, who believes in fairies. It's formulaic, but it delivers.

## This bonkers show is panning for comedy gold – Peter Pan Goes Wrong, review **Dominic Cavendish**, THEATRE CRITIC

(Four Stars)

In just three years, Mischief Theatre have gone from being fringe hopefuls to the clown princes of the West End. What an incredible rags-to-riches story. How have they got things so spectacularly right? By getting things spectacularly wrong. The forte of core writing-team Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer and Henry Shields (who all met at drama school) lies in manufacturing on-stage ineptitude and distilling the bungling essence of human nature.

What with *The Play That Goes Wrong* at the Duchess, *The Comedy About A Bank Robbery* at the Criterion – both long-runners - and now the return, after success last year, of their festive spin-off, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*, you'd think they'd reached saturation point. But who knows, maybe they could fill up all of Shaftesbury Avenue. Next stop: *The Comedy About the Presidential Election*?

In *The Play That Goes Wrong* (their first hit), “Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society” come woefully unstuck as they try to do their best by a creaky country-house thriller called *Murder at Haversham Manor*. In this outing, the team are having a go at *Peter Pan*, and the same comic itinerary lies in store: collapsing sets, misplaced props, mistimed cues, hopeless attempts to cover for mistakes that create a domino-effect of mishap, warring egos; ambition exceeding ability.

Although I came down too hard on the first show – feeling that it was a knock-off version of Michael Frayn's farce-about-a-reppy farce *Noises Off* – this follow-up strikes me as more accomplished and more minute-by-minute fun. The essential proposition is very simple – the sustained mangling of JM Barrie's classic – but the production, directed by Adam Meggido, has been conceived on a more elaborate scale, and its latent logistical finesse is remarkable.

You need to indulge straightaway the obvious nonsense of this am-dram venture reaching the West End. And if you remember the unfortunate incident of the 2013 ceiling-collapse at the Apollo, too, you have to relax safe in the knowledge that this health-and-safety (combined with an actor's) nightmare is mere invention.

True, the front-row nearly jump out of their skin when a stage-light crashes to the ground, just feet away, and there's a palpable sense of alarm in the stalls whenever clothing catches fire. But the jeopardy lies with the cast. And while the many faux-accidents are meticulously handled, the evening affords the genuine frisson that if any of the company muck up, it really might be curtains.

Greg Tannahill (playing “Jonathan” who plays Pan) swings so violently on his flying harness, this way and that, bashing into the scenery, it feels like a miracle he takes his bow in one piece. If the over-arching joke is at the expense of thespian endeavour, we still

come away marvelling at just how much has to be in place for things to run smoothly on even a standard show.

To itemise what happens, when, would spoil the mirth, but the opening scene give a fair indication, with the Darlings' genteel nursery swiftly transformed into a disaster-zone. There's a structurally unsound bunk-bed for the children (among them Dave Hearn's unstoppably smirking Michael and Jonathan Sayer's word-imperfect John, wearing headphones to feed him the lines); Nana the dog gets stuck in a door-flap and has to be noisily rescued, mid-lullaby, by the stage-crew; the lift-off to Neverland whisks the Darlings' clothes up and away but leaves the adventurers grounded in their underwear.

By the end of a faintly exhausting hour, the entire cast, and even the revolving set, seem to have had a nervous break-down. Not just an ideal festive treat, all told, but the perfect show for those who feel the world has gone bonkers.

## Cast and Crew

**Director** Adam Meggido (he also appears as the Park Keeper in the short movie clip which has Hook on a Pedalo)

**Writers** Henry Shield, Henry Lewis and Jonathan Sayer (all lead actors in the play as well)

Actor	Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society Character	Peter Pan Character(s)
Chris Leask	Trevor	Stage Manager
Dave Hearn	Max	Michael/Crocodile
Charlie Russell	Sandra	Wendy
Greg Tannahill	Jonathan	Peter Pan
Nancy Zamit	Annie	Mrs. Darling/ Liza/Tinker Bell/ Pirate/ Tiger Lily
Ellie Morris	Lucy	Tootles
Jonathan Sayer	Dennis (headset)	John/ Smee
David Suchet	Himself	Narrator
Henry Shields	Chris	Mr. Darling/ Hook
Henry Lewis	Robert	Nana/ Shadow/ Starkey