

How to Catch a Star



Polka Theatre Age 6 months-2 years
Children's Theatre

The focus of this play without words for children aged six months to two years (in a truncated 30-minute format) or two to five years (the full 45 minutes) is a glittering prize that seems just out of reach to the boy who loves it.

Directed by Jonathan Lloyd and based on the book by Oliver Jeffers, it's an infinitely gentle two-hander that runs prettily along the tracks of this one simple idea – boy wishes for a star to call his own, so attempts various methods to get hold of it.

With no script to labour the message, the boy's desire, ideas and inevitable frustration are communicated through music and action. The music comes courtesy of Julian Butler on his piano, providing a stellar accompaniment to the rhythm of the drama. The action part of the simple formula is down to the wide-eyed Daniel Naddafy as the starlorn boy. His dream of making a friend of the celestial is played out in a merry little reverie, when a glorious, sparkly



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Daniel Naddafy's prop has star quality

starry shape comes to play, much to the delight of the nursery school children I accompanied. They also loved the 'lift the flap' set, which yielded various props essential to they boy's star-catching plans. There were, however, slightly languorous stretches when little went on except Naddafy looking wistful, or when he painstakingly demonstrated his tootiny puppet doppelgänger launching himself starward. At such points the infant audience briefly lost their hold on developments, only for their attention to be recaptured by the free-flowing soundscape that helps turn the pages of this picture book show.

Ronnie Haydon