

Review: Underwater

By Erica Vitai and Keana Reed

***Underwater* at Theatre Royal Plymouth**

We both remember our first trips to see live theatre: The King and I aged 5 (Erica) and the panto aged 7 (Keana). Now we will also remember our children's first trips to the theatre, to see Underwater in The Drum at Theatre Royal Plymouth. At four months old, Eliza and Sidney are definitely more cultured than us and what a great introduction to theatre we gave them!

As we entered the auditorium, we all chose a lovely glittery lily pad to sit on for the show. Just this simple act of sitting on the floor rather than on the normal seats made everything feel more relaxed and inclusive, with the performance taking place on the children's level. It was also refreshing and reassuring to be told at the start of the performance that we shouldn't worry if our babies cried (something that all new parents fear when in public!) – we could feed or comfort them whenever they needed.

Underwater is a magical exploration of the sea and the creatures that live in it. When a ballerina wakes up and appears on stage from under a sequined blanket, she goes on a journey of the sea, dancing with a jellyfish and two very sweet octopus.

The sensory elements were a big hit with Eliza and Sidney – the coloured scarves that the jellyfish shed on its way around the audience, the amazing sequined blanket that the ballerina appeared from and the beautiful octopus puppets which Eliza loved stroking. Oh and of course the bubbles, all children love bubbles! There was time after the show for the children to fully explore some of these sensory elements themselves too, which was a nice touch. Eliza and Sidney loved the sequined blanket in particular!

The music choice was perfect – the acoustic versions of familiar songs (well, familiar to us now we have children!) such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star', really fit with the dreamlike movements on the stage. So dreamlike in fact, that it led Sidney to copy the baby octopus and take a nap of his own!

The entire experience was mesmerising for Eliza and Sidney who couldn't take their



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eyes off the ballerina moving around the stage. We can't wait to bring them along to see more shows... next stop, Les Miserables?!