

THE LAST CONTINENT

[Unseen Theatre Company](#)

[Bakehouse Theatre](#)

Until 04 Oct 2014

Review by [Anthony Vawser](#)

There are a lot of things in life that become more enjoyable through experience. Terry Pratchett plays probably fall into this category. The more one appreciates ("understands" would not necessarily be the right word) the tone of droll lunacy that Pratchett strives for in his stories, the more fun you are likely to have.

And yet, perhaps the more Pratchett plays one watches, the easier it also becomes to tell when you are having a less enjoyable experience than you did last time - or even last act...This is all a somewhat roundabout way of attempting to explain this reviewer's feelings toward the return season of Unseen Theatre Company's "The Last Continent". Act One was solidly delightful and engaging, with nothing major to complain about; post-interval, the show seemed to lose its lustre.

The opening plot set-up is appealingly wacky, presented in that rather deadpan style that the British seem to have made their own. Chris Irving's wizard Rincewind makes for a likeable hero, and he is surrounded by generally solid performances, with a number of colourful characters crafting a unique experience out of Terry Pratchett's typically clever and complex comedy. The resemblance of an orangutan character to the trolls from Ron Howard & George Lucas' "Willow" - not to mention Rincewind being (visually) a dead ringer for children's entertainer Franciscus Henri - are both unexpected (and probably inadvertent) enhancements to the experience.

This particular play is largely a satire on the Australian way of life; as a result, we get Skippy playing a part in proceedings, as well as other more unusual plot turns involving icons of Oz culture. Comedy can be a very tricky art (and sense of humour can be a very personal matter), but too many of the 'clever' references in the second half of this show felt more laboured than funny, or at least not worth the time and effort it took to set them up.

In the end, 'The Last Continent' happily offers more satisfaction than dissatisfaction. It still manages to do what you always hope theatre will do: it gives you something fresh and interesting, and leaves you feeling glad you came.

"I'm glad I'm not religious; it all sounds very complicated", declares Rincewind at one point. In the past, the Discworld (or Pratchett world, if you like) has seemed rather like a religion to this reviewer, and a particularly mysterious, cryptic one at that. With this production of "The Last Continent", despite misgivings, it is an overall pleasure to report a greater feeling of familiarity, equaling an ever greater pleasure in, and appreciation for, the imagination of Sir Terry, as well as the ambition and artistry of Unseen Theatre Company.